

Football Premiership: Manchester United 3 Leeds United 2

Reds rise to Ferguson's challenge

David Hogg

ALEX FERGUSON had unmistakably thrown down the challenge last Sunday, warning that he would be "examining in every detail the attitudes and standards" of a Manchester United side whose Premiership challenge has been undermined too often by the rival attractions of the Champions League.

Even such notably hard taskmasters can purr with delight on occasions, and Ferguson was delighted by this response. There is no more passionate challenge to United than that provided by their rivals from across the Pennines. They had to stretch every sinew, burst every lung before victory was achieved.

This was Leeds's New Camp, Manchester United might have gained plaudits for a thrilling mid-week draw in Barcelona, but Leeds seized the opportunity to cause further embarrassment to a side whose Premiership lapses, according to Ferguson, had been "unacceptable". The manager having drawn the line, his players defended it to the hilt as usual; they had to.

Only 12 minutes remained of an enthralling contest when Manchester United surmounted the goal that swept them back into second place, Aston Villa's lend now only a point.

Appropriately it fell to Nicky Butt, the sort of fringe senior player at whom Ferguson's words had been directed, the first goal of the season coming as he swivelled just inside the area to beat Paul Robinson with a rasping drive. "He has had a



Manchester United's Dwight Yorke congratulates goalkeeper Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

PHOTO: NEAL SIMPSON

mixed season but today he was our best player," Ferguson said. "It was fantastic result for us, but the most entertaining game I've ever known against Leeds at Old Trafford."

Leeds, finally, were spent, but their first away defeat in the Premiership this season brought upon

them considerable credit, as they were disturbed defensively by injuries to Martin Hiden, who may be absent for a month with knee ligament trouble, and to their goalkeeper Nigel Martyn.

Butt had looked in disbelief at the best of these saves: with the game

still goalless, Martyn kept prodigiously to claw his header on in the air, sustaining a back injury as he fell on to his hip.

In Ferguson's search for "freshness" this was a United side with their wings clipped: no David Beckham, no Jesper Blomqvist, and

Ryan Giggs appearing only as second-half substitute, Leeds encouraging, lacking in focus in central areas and tiring in numbers, their efforts being countered by the likes of Kewell and Jimmy Floyd Beasley.

Leeds survived Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's appeals for a pace when he felt under Gosselin's challenge, before Hasebe provided them with a half-hour's rest, entirely unrecognised from the craggy, flabby figure of a few weeks ago, drove determinedly from the left and his powerful shot careered into the net at the inside of the near post.

Martyn, who had at one drop kick, patted balls at his feet in touch in near despair and sat excellently from Solskjaer and Gosselin, was hurried round by a pair of pinkies, hurried round by a manager, David O'Leary. His duty, though, was to pick the ball from the net, Solskjaer reacting, Dwight Yorke's pace to beat him with a low, angled drive.

For Martyn to survive the last-minute thing, to emerge for the rest, was practically impossible. He gave way to his teenage understudy, John Souttar, who through no fault of his own was beaten within 10 seconds of the restart, Roy Keane side-stepping into the roof of the net after he. Souttar had sped outside Ian Harte.

That Leeds could summon a one response in the face of so mounting casualties seemed unlikely, but within six minutes they were level.

Kewell, full of vim throughout, capitalised upon an error by Keane and his left-foot finish. Schweinsteiger was delightfully composed, Robinson's saves then kept Leeds alive until the moment he brought Butt's season alive.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY, December 19

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Week ending December 13, 1998

Israel faces meltdown over peace deal

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

ISRAELI prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, won a two-week reprieve from a crucial parliamentary confidence vote after peace negotiations on Monday that averted the prospect of a change in government.

Fighting to stay in office just days before President Clinton arrives to try to revitalise the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, Mr Netanyahu was told that he must decide either to form a national unity government or to call early general elections.

The power-broker behind this deal, conducted during hours of Netanyahu's absence, was Ehud Barak, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party — Israel's fastest-growing political movement.

As the domestic political scene approached meltdown, violence erupted for the fourth day in the West Bank. A Palestinian student tried to assassinate Yasser Arafat's chief negotiator in the peace process, Yassir Arafat, who shot and declared clinically dead in hospital, while a Jewish settler was shot and injured near the largely Arab city of Jenin.

The violence and the fraught political situation are casting an ugly shadow over President Clinton's planned three-day visit this week-end. The visit was meant to reinforce the international community's determination to see Israel and the Palestinians implement the land-for-peace deal reached in October at the Wye plantation in Maryland.

But a hunger strike by 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in protest at Israel's failure to free Arab political prisoners has made the tense atmosphere worse, with Israelis and Palestinians trading ever more incendiary threats.

Nasser Erekat, a 22-year-old student at the West Bank's Bir Zeit university, was pronounced clinically dead at a Nakasse hospital in East Jerusalem on Monday night.



Palestinian youths fire catapults at Israeli soldiers during clashes in Bethlehem

PHOTOGRAPH: SANTIAGO LYON

He had been shot in the head during a demonstration in Hebron, southern Jerusalem. Another protester was hit in the hip.

In the northern West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian police shot and wounded 11 Arabs in a crowd that tried to storm their headquarters. The protesters had set fire to two police cars and a bus after being beaten back from the Israeli enclave of Joseph's Tomb during a rally in support of prisoners.

Israel's political turmoil, created by the gaping divisions in Mr Netanyahu's coalition over the Wye deal

— which is supposed to return a further 13 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians in return for a crackdown on Islamic extremists — has put into doubt the schedule of Mr Clinton's visit, due to begin on Saturday.

Mr Netanyahu's was deepened after he failed to strengthen his government by co-opting a former foreign minister, David Levy, back into the cabinet and bolstering his meagre Knesset majority of 61-59. But Mr Levy turned him down, and the opposition Labour party — which removed his "safety net" after

Mr Netanyahu announced last week that he was suspending implementation of the Wye agreement because of alleged Palestinian misdeeds — was confident it had enough votes to defeat the government.

After Monday night's deal, which sets back the confidence vote by 14 days, Mr Netanyahu said: "Over the next two weeks they [Mr Netanyahu and the Labour leader, Ehud Barak] should decide whether to go together to form a national unity government or call elections."

Washington Post, page 16

Door opens for first steps in human cloning

Sarah Bosley

A REPORT this week that will take British scientists to the head of the line in the race to clone a human embryo for research purposes has drawn widespread protest.

The Human Fertilisation and Embology Authority (HFEA) and the Human Genetics Advisory Commission (HGAC) are consulting on the ethics of cloning since January.

On Tuesday they published their conclusions, firmly opposing the cloning of a human child in place of a normal means of reproduction.

With increased urgency ever since Dolly, the cloned sheep, was created nearly two years ago, the HFEA/HGAC wants to anticipate what may be possible in 10 years' time so that the debate will precede the technology. The report proposes leaving the door open, but insists that scientists will have many hurdles to cross if they seek permission to experiment in this area.

It expects to be asked to permit the cloning of an embryo of perhaps eight to 10 days' growth. The procedure would be to remove a cell from the skin of a human being and fuse its nucleus into a human egg from which the nucleus has been removed. The embryo would develop in a test tube to the

point where a line of stem cells — the basic cells which have the potential to become any part of the human body, whether brain, kidney or leg — have developed. The material could then be frozen and stored for later use.

Medical opinion is in favour of proceeding with cloning in the hope of helping the sufferers of diseases such as Parkinson's.

Sir Colin Campbell, chairman of the HGAC, said: "We believe it would not be right at this stage to rule out limited research using such techniques, which could be of great benefit to seriously ill people."

The greatest advantage to cloned material is that it will not be rejected by the body from which the original cell was

taken. Some scientists in the forefront of the field talk of the potential for developing "spare body parts" — the possibility of cells being removed from babies at birth, to be cloned, developed into stem cells, and then stored against the day when needed for a replacement organ, such as a kidney or a heart.

The anti-cloning lobby is appalled that the HFEA will not stop further experimentation. Patrick Dixon, a leading anti-cloning campaigner, said the HFEA's report would be "a Christmas present for cloners around the world."

"Human clones will be created in British labs," he predicted, and would be the clones of new human beings, such as Richard Seed in the United States, would be able to profit from the research.

Impeachment hangs over Clinton's head

Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL CLINTON is facing an increasingly uphill battle to avoid impeachment after a key Republican leader dug in against moving a vote of censure against the president in the House of Representatives.

Congressman Tom DeLay of Texas, the whip for the Republican majority in the 435-member House, said this week that a censure vote would be "a terrible precedent" and should be kept off the agenda when the House votes on impeachment.

Mr DeLay's move came days before the House judiciary committee is expected to draft at least one article of impeachment against Mr Clinton, based on the Monica Lewinsky affair, in an increasingly uncompromising political atmosphere in Washington.

The censure campaign is under assault after Mr Clinton, in answers to 81 questions from the committee last week, angered Republicans and disavowed a few Democrats by refusing to retreat from his long-standing denial of lawbreaking in his relations with the former White House intern.

That leaves the increasing probability that the issue will come down to a straight congressional shootout on impeachment in the coming week, with only a handful of votes deciding the majority either way.

Mr DeLay wants to tighten the screws on the group of Republican waverers who favour censure, including a fine levied on Mr Clinton.

The Republicans have a 228-207 majority in the outgoing House, which means that 11 Republicans would need to vote with all the Democrats and the lone Independent to prevent Mr Clinton facing the ignominy of a Senate trial.

Washington Post, page 16

Moderates take stand in Iran

Taiwan avoids
China showdown

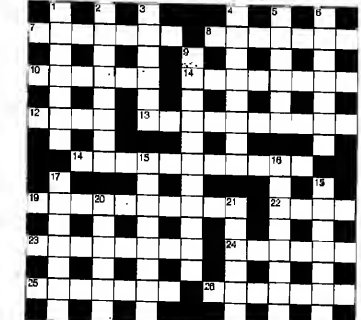
Holocaust focuses
American thoughts

Human rights: 50
years of progress

Why does Europe
so hate Turkey?

Austria	ASBO	Malta	50c
Belgium	DK17	Netherlands	G 6
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
France	FR 14	Portugal	ES00
Germany	DM 420	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Hungary	HUF 500	Switzerland	SF 9.50
Italy	L 5.000		

Cryptic crossword by Rufus



Across

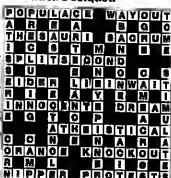
7. Shout out various numbers during course of test (7)
8. As result of special deal, English railway passed through another station (7)
10. Key operators may strike against it (6)
11. Lois died broke but greatly admired (6)
12. Time that is right for a row (4)
13. Spot cash the bookmakers must be prepared to pay out (6,5)
14. Intrigued at form of non-appreciation (11)
19. It may provide accompaniment to "Pinetree" production (10)
22. Unpleasant of money (4)
23. Dude pale before to ride on the ranch (6,2)
24. Cats in the pound (6)
25. La Costa resort by the sea (7)

Down

1. To give reasons no longer simple (7)
2. Pressing need for home club (6)
3. Billy has hot tip, might make gangster's fortune (6)

4. Suggestive of European river rising fast (6)
5. Where people make pots on a wheel? (6)
6. Intriguing woman had her lace painted? (7)
9. Martin hopes to mix, the very thing he hates (11)
11. Firm, lean sort of lighting men (8)
15. Uppel caused by greed and corruption (8)
17. One may be mounted in a ring (7)
18. She's a real swinger in Paris life (7)
20. It sounds bad — not so, he's in the pink (6)
21. String noise affecting Greece and Cyprus (8)

Last week's solution



Tennis ATP Tour Championship

Corretja fights to the finish

Stephen Barley in Henover

HIS all-Spanish ATP Tour Championship final between Alex Corretja and Carlos Moya, a re-run of this year's French Open, was an extraordinary contest. Moya had more than half won the match before Corretja staged a remarkable comeback and went on to win 3-6, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-5.

Moya's daunting good looks, shoulder-length hair, baggy clothing and huge paddle feet are more than enough to stifle him out on any court, yet it is the quality of his shots, notably a searing forehand, the intensity of his serve and his athleticism which suggested that there was a Spaniard for all seasons and surfaces.

His straight-set victory over the 19-year-old Moya, who had been a largely bloodless affair, the two men embracing each other and talking of their undying friendship. This time, having beaten Britain's Tim Henman in the semi-final, Moya warned: "I will have no friend. I'm going to fight to the death."

Perhaps he should have kept his mouth shut, for it was Corretja, the stock semi-final winner over the world's No 1, Sampras, who fought to the death, dropping to his knees at the close. Moya sank on WCP

chair and tried to comprehend the victory. It was a defeat that for months to come will surely trouble the 22-year-old Spaniard, the youngest in the eighteen final.

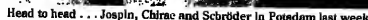
Unlike Moya, Corretja is not a charismatic figure, but like the former he has taught himself to play on hard courts and indoors by sheer application.

The victory here made him the first player to win the event, formerly the Masters, at the first attempt since John McEnroe 30 years ago. That Corretja saved three match points against Sampras should have warned Moya of his impending fate.

"Alex is hitting the ball real heavy," said Sampras, for Moya the blows were sledgehammers. Corretja ends the year as the world's No 3, behind Sampras and Andre Agassi. Both left here considerably richer, Henman by \$315,000 and Rusedski by \$272,000. Both winners will face the new year with considerable confidence, the Wimbledon defeat being their prime objective. What would they — give now for a quarter-share of Corretja's mighty power.

John in life

Since the national veto is enshrined in the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties, this will require a new treaty, which in turn requires a new Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) to prepare it. The Germans, who assume the presidency



British Eurocentric press to new heights of xenophobia. "Foxtro Oskar" blared the front page of the Sun, with the "F" and the "O" picked out in red. The coarseness of the insult and the vulgarity of the wit had to be explained to baffled Euro-

emerged in the Franco-German summit. There was a serious clash over reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), where Chirac said "compromise will still be needed" in a wide-reaching negotiation, at which Dutch and British

He has been given a grim warning of the kind of propaganda barrage he will face when he calls the referendum and appeals to the public to agree to give up the pound in favour of the euro, and all that

Meanwhile the Czech-born man who is now the US

The event that prompted Albright to speak so personally about such intense questions was a conference in Washington last week. Hosted by Albright's own state department,

There are legitimate questions to be raised and a proper debate to be held about whether, at this distance

bright had made her moving plea for openness, her spokesman James Rubin appeared at the state department to talk about US relations with Chile. He explained that Washing-

... is a good disclosure
with regard to the Nazis, then there
is no reason why it should not also
apply to one of the Nazis' more
effective successors.

The Guardian
Weekly

Knows *HO* bou

Boundaries

selected companies.

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هَذَا مِنْ الْقَوْلِ

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Robinson faces death by a thousand disclosures

FRESH DOUBTS were raised about the nihilist future of the Paymaster-General, Geoffrey Robinson, when he was called into Downing Street and questioned about his business links with the disgraced newspaper tycoon, the late Robert Maxwell. Although there was no suggestion that No 10 was unhappy with his explanations, the continuing flow of allegations about his past business dealings threaten to undermine his authority.

The millionaire businessman was stoutly defended by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, when it was revealed a year ago that he was the beneficiary of a multi-million-pound trial in the offshore tax haven of Guernsey. Mr Brown also defended him when he was forced to apologise to the Commons for failing to declare a shareholding in the Register of Members' Interests. It was the second time he had been rebuked for breaching parliamentary rules concerning his outside interests.

The latest revelations concern his former chairmanship of Hollis Industries, an engineering firm linked with Maxwell. In 1991 Hollis sold two subsidiaries to another wing of the Maxwell empire for nearly £5 million. Within hours they were sold again, to yet another Maxwell firm, at a profit of £1.1 million. Six months later, Hollis went into administration. Mr Robinson is facing an investigation by the Department of Trade and Industry over more than a dozen allegations that he broke company law before he became a minister. And there was a fresh claim last week that a director owes £500,000 to the inland revenue.

Mr Robinson is well liked by his fellow MPs, though many of them wonder why, with his means, he wanted ministerial office anyway. He may well be wondering the same thing himself, and colleagues were speculating this week that he might stand down over the Christmas recess, possibly on health grounds.

PRO-LIFE campaigners and church groups threatened a boycott of the Boots chain of chemists' shops because it opened a family planning clinic in Glasgow store where young people can get free contraceptives.

The project, a joint venture between Glasgow Health Trust and the University of Glasgow, was aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies and will run "drop-in" clinics for customers, particularly young people, to seek advice and information.

Protesters immediately picketed the Glasgow store and threatened to organise flying picket protests at stores across the UK and Ireland.

At learning that a Roman Catholic newspaper, The Universe, with a readership of 200,000, was planning to run a front-page editorial headlined "Don't shop at Boots", the firm said it was reconsidering whether to keep its clinic open.

APPROTEST against the Government's imposition of a £1,000 tuition fee on university students blew up, to everyone's surprise, at Balliol College, Oxford, where two Middlesbrough students, Kevin Aldridge and Alice Neal, refused to pay. They were refusing, they said, not

because they could not pay, but because they would not. They were risking their own careers on behalf of coming generations of students too poor to attend university.

The intention to charge fees, announced earlier this year, was roundly condemned by Oxford's junior common rooms, and some freshers have been withholding their payment, but there was little doubt that they would comply in the end.

Miss Atkinson and Miss Nash, both high-fliers with impressive school records, could be suspended from the start of next term, if it happens, Oxford's junior common rooms hint that there may be wider disruption.

The Balliol authorities, fearful that letting students be absent to make a comeback, have set up a scheme to help poor students with their fees. They are reluctant to suspend students who cannot pay, but not those who refuse to pay.

CARLTON Communications faced a humiliating cliffhanger over a failed television documentary, The Connection, which purported to expose drug trade routes into Britain. It may have to hand back eight national and international awards won by the film.

An internal inquiry found nearly 20 important discrepancies in the hour-long documentary, which was shown in 14 countries. It found two major unproven claims, including the central thesis that there was a new heroin route from Colombia to the streets of Britain. An inquiry conceded that the film, in which three central characters were paid to act roles, should not have been broadcast.

The regulatory Independent Television Commission will meet next week to decide whether to impose a statutory sanction on Carlton. Meanwhile the broadcaster is to establish tough new internal vetting procedures for potentially contentious programmes.

THE GAY rights activist, Peter Tatchell, was fined £18,600 for a "puerile" protest from the pulpit of St. Martin's Church in London's East End. He was convicted under the little-known Ecclesiastical Court Jurisdiction Act of 1960.

The court heard that Tatchell, aged 46, and six other activists from the gay rights group OutRage! climbed into the pulpit during Dr George Carey's sermon at St. Martin's Cathedral, before being removed, he protested about the archbishop's opposition to gay fostering and an equal age of consent.

He was the first person in 21 years to be successfully prosecuted under the act, which forbade "riotous, violent or indecent behaviour" in any cathedral church.

The disciplinary magistrate told Tatchell he had "violated the rights of worshippers on one of the most important days in the Christian calendar", though the size of the fine suggested he did not consider it to be a serious offence. A spokesman for Dr Carey said the archbishop had had no role in the prosecution and was "committed to a continuing dialogue with homosexuals".



Gridlock... London's mayor will be given power to charge drivers

Traffic will become London mayor's priority

Peter Hetherington

THE DEPUTY Prime Minister, John Prescott, last week promised Londoners the most modern form of city government in Europe, with an elected mayor and a capital-wide council with powers to clamp down on motorists and to revive public transport.

Unravelling the Greater London Authority Bill, Mr Prescott said traffic congestion would be at the heart of the legislation. The bill is likely to be one of the most complex in the new parliamentary session.

As his Department of the Environment and Transport reported that average rush-hour speeds in

the capital had fallen to 12mph, Mr Prescott said the London mayor would be given power to charge motorists on designated routes and levy fees from bus employers with company car parks. The revenue would be used to improve underground, rail and bus services.

Centrepiece of the bill will be an agency called Transport for London, under the wing of the mayor and the capital's assembly. It will be responsible for the Underground and buses, and have powers to implement road charging.

But Mr Prescott warned that the Government might have to delay handing over responsibility for the Underground. He admitted that

discussions with private companies — which will have the task of unravelling it — might not be complete by mid-2000, when the mayor and assembly may well have been elected.

Critics point to potential friction between the mayor and the 25-member assembly. They will share the budget of £2.5 billion, covering areas including fire services and the police.

The mayor, supported by a small cabinet, will "develop strategies and action plans" while preparing budgets, while the assembly will prove a "check and balance" with powers to amend the budget and scrutinise mayoral decisions.

Legal aid gets shake-up

Clare Dyer

THE most radical shake-up of the English legal system for at least 50 years was outlined by the Lord Chancellor in a White Paper last week.

The Access to Justice Bill will revamp the legal aid scheme to target resources more on ordinary people's legal needs and less on lawyers and the courts.

Through a new Community Legal Service, money saved by tighter controls on the grant of civil legal aid and on lawyers' fees will be diverted to help for the disadvantaged in such areas as debt, welfare benefits, housing and children's cases, provided through both lawyers and advice centres.

The Government aims to get better value for taxpayers' money by ensuring, through a contracts system, that only competent lawyers carry out publicly funded

work. The £1.6 billion legal aid budget will come under its control for the first time.

The Lord Chancellor dismissed arguments that the changes would lead to lack of choice. "If I was the man in the street, I would prefer a choice among quality-guaranteed lawyers rather than go to a lawyer who might not have the skills and experience for the case in hand."

For the 1 per cent of high-cost criminal cases which cost up to 40 per cent of the crown court's legal aid budget, individual case contracts will be struck with lawyers. Some QC's have received £400,000 or more from legal aid in a single year.

The bill will abolish the Legal Aid Board and set up a new Legal Services Commission in two parts: a Community Legal Service and a Criminal Defence Service.

The Community Legal Service will co-ordinate Citizens' Advice

Bureaux, law centres and other advice sources, with the more specialised services provided by lawyers as legal help can be better targeted on those in real need, and negotiate contracts with lawyers and others.

The Community Legal Service Fund will replace civil legal aid money spent on this aid the voluntary agencies will be treated as a whole. As legal costs come under control, the aim is to divert funds to more basic advice and help services for the poor and disadvantaged.

A "funding mechanism" will place the current merits test for deciding who qualifies for civil legal aid. No-win, no-fee agreements will be extended to cover divorce and property.

The current means test will be abolished, but judges will be able to order a convicted defendant to meet the costs of the defence.

The Community Legal Service will co-ordinate Citizens' Advice

Mandelson's team win gobbledygook award

PETER Mandelson has won the Plain English Campaign's Golden Bull Award for gobbledygook, for his department's minimum wage draft regulations, which include the memorably named category of "hours of non-bours work".

Robert Kilroy-Silk, the TV presenter and former Labour MP, will present the annual awards made by the campaign — a self-appointed public guardian

against bureaucratic gibberish and incomprehensible official jargon — in London this week.

A spokesman for the Trade and Industry Secretary said that Mr Mandelson would be unable to attend, but had ordered the re-drafting of the prize-winning passage as a result of the Plain English Campaign's dubious accolade.

In a reply to Christine Maher, the campaign's director and founder, Mr Mandelson said her

letter announcing his prize had arrived at an "opportune moment" and "inspired the drafters" to re-think the offending words.

"Hours of non-bours work" is a variation on the phrase "hours of non-work", which was supposed to cover people such as youth hostel workers, who have no set work to do but are not paid.

Mr Cash unrolled his list of six foot something, and majestically

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1999

Tories in turmoil after Lords deal fails

Michael White and Ewan MacAuliffe

THE Conservative party was riven by an historic split last week when William Hague was forced to sack Lord Cranborne, his leader in the House of Lords, after an unauthorised backstairs deal with Labour over abolition of hereditary voting rights that went spectacularly wrong.

Mr Hague revealed the plan — which would have allowed nearly 100 of the 759 hereditary peers to stay on until a fully reformed upper house was established — in dramatic exchanges at Prime Minister's Question Time in the Commons. Only a handful of key players on either side had known about the scheme designed to avoid a fight with the Lords this winter that might have wrecked the Cabinet's legislative programme.

The Conservative leader then faced a revolt by Tory peers who backed Lord Cranborne's compromise by 80 votes to 20 despite Mr Hague's plea for a principled stand over Lords reform. At an emergency shadow cabinet meeting, he promptly sacked Lord Cranborne for what the peer admitted had been "going behind his back" to Downing Street for three weeks of talks.

Mr Hague immediately addressed a meeting of backbench Tory MPs who endorsed his position even more emphatically than astonished peers had rejected it.

It confirmed a split which, some MPs predicted, could either finally split the Tory party or set it on the road to modernisation, free from centuries of elitist privilege.

Mr Hague appointed the chief whip, Lord Skelton, an hereditary peer, to the vacancy.

Even loyal Tory MPs were dismayed. "It's a catastrophe, the end of the party as we know it," said one. "Lord Skelton has played it brilliantly, he's captured our anxiety," conceded another.

In backing outright war in the Lords ministers hoped to use the time saved to get through extra bills to set up the Food Standards Agency and the Strategic Rail Authority.

The crossbenchers have been



privately seeking a consensus on Lords reform for two years. Led by the former Speaker, Lord Weatherill, they were 10 minutes from unveiling the 91-peer deal to a Westminster press conference when Mr Hague unexpectedly addressed the plan at Question Time.

Touting Mr Blair about "this huge cliffhanger" over New Labour's favourite whipping boy, the hereditary peers, Mr Hague said the Tories were "not prepared to apologise in that change because we are not prepared to join forces with him on royal constitutional change that is based on no comprehensive plan or principle".

At the heart of the row was a compromise thrashed out behind the scenes between Mr Blair, Lord Cranborne, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, and Baroness Jay, the new Labour Leader of the Lords, that would have smoothed the

passage of the Lords reform bill. Under the deal, the 91 hereditary peers would be elected by their own parties in proportion to their current strength — 42 Tories, 28 crossbenchers, two Labour and three Lib Dems. How long they would last would depend on how long it took Mr Blair's royal commission to produce "stage two" reforms, a partly elected upper house. Three years, said Labour at least five, said Tories.

What is extraordinary is Lord Cranborne's belief that it was good to be in the dock, he described his actions produced the Conservatives' most single day since the general election disaster.

A Tory frontbench peer said: "We stole defeat from the jaws of victory. We should have had Tony Blair on every bulletin trying to explain away the deal on the peers, instead, we were in the dock." He described Mr Hague as being primarily to blame for screwing up Lord Cranborne's carefully worked deal on Lords reform.

But despite the chaos, Mr Hague's leadership in under no immediate threat because no credible alternative candidate exists who

would be acceptable to Tory MPs. Mr Hague has complex reasons for rejecting a deal, but mainly because he has no lever in the Commons, given the size of the Labour majority. But a more skillful politician than Mr Hague would have limited the deal better.

The poor state of their relations became obvious during the Lords-Commons ping-pong over the European elections bill: Lord Cranborne wanted to settle with the Government but Mr Hague insisted on pushing it to the point that the Government lost its bill.

The credibility of Mr Hague sagged under fresh blows when four peers resigned from his frontbench in protest at Lord Cranborne's sacking. Most prominent was Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, Lord Cranborne's deputy. Lord Bowness, Lord Pilkington and the Earl of Home joined him. Later Baroness Strange, a hereditary Scottish peer, and Baroness Ffrench announced they were quitting the Tory whip to sit on the crossbenches in protest.

Comment, page 12

Ambassador rebuked

Richard Norton-Taylor

SIR David Gore-Booth, one of the Foreign Office's most controversial diplomats, was severely rebuked last week in a damning report by the parliamentary ombudsman, who described the (unnamed) envoy's conduct over a consular complaint as "wholly deplorable".

In a report which contains unprecedented criticism of Foreign Office officials, the ombudsman, Michael Buckley, described the department's response to the complaint as "disingenuous" and castigated the Foreign Office for refusing to apologise for the ambassador's indiscreet action.

The complainant, a British citizen, was obliged to resign from the company he worked for after the ambassador criticised the man's conduct in a letter to his chief executive. The company, which was not identified, was a government contractor.

The employee complained in 1994 about having to pay a fee to the British consul for a letter of introduction to obtain a tourist visa from another country. He described the consular staff as "inefficient, unhelpful, and rude".

The ambassador subsequently passed the man's letters of complaint to the company's chief executive, without the employee's knowledge.

The FO has agreed to give the former company employee an ex gratia payment of £5,000, but no disciplinary action has been taken against the ambassador.

Sir David, now high commissioner to Saudi Arabia at the time, was an Oxford-educated, former soldier, who was famously told the Scott Arms-to-Iraq inquiry that "of course, half a picture can be accurate". He also memorably described Iranians as people who "do not think logically", and called Indian officials "incompetent bunglers". Sir David is to leave the FO at the end of this year.

New twist for end of the peers show

Sketch Simon Hoggart

HAVE AN idea, live news story emerged from Prime Minister's Question Time last week. It was a simple one: it's like the English between not collaborating with the Queen during in public. It is against the natural order of things.

Mr Hague's Question Time is supposed to be a show where the Queen is present in a public park. Everyone is far too polite to have any idea what it's about except that it's vital to be on the winning side.

We attended sketchwriters had to be helped from the Gallery, and supported to the bar, where we lubricated but did not drink. The person I felt sorry for was Mr Cash, the greatest European of them all. Mr Cash had drawn the first question to the Prime Minister's Question Time, the subject of harmonised Europe.

Mr Cash unrolled his list of six foot something, and majestically

quoted Churchill: "Tell the truth to the British people," he intoned. "They have been misled! The time has come for you to tell us the truth!"

Mr Blair had no such intention. He ended the question by promising to "represent this country properly and faithfully", whatever that might mean.

On any other day bellhops Tories might have tried to slice him down. He was wearing a brown strim, red tie and a brown jacket. He was not Mr Cash's moment of triumph had beckoned and then disappeared. He looked like the father of the bride looking that the groom has just been spotted in a tuxedo to the airport.

Mr Hague rose and asked, with the mock ingenueness that always starts his first question, whether the Prime Minister was "happy to see nearly 100 hereditary peers continue to sit in the House of Lords after your forthcoming Bill has been enacted".

Labour MPs looked antebellum. It was the first they had heard of this extraordinary wheeze, the rubber

bladed guillotine as it might be termed.

I am delighted to see from your question it is an indication that you are now prepared to agree to what would remove hereditary peers altogether in two stages.

A Tory MP tried to rally but there was no denying their shock. It was as if Mr Cash's hero were to have told the British people: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, but probably not in the fields or streets. As for surrender, we shall approach that question on a phased basis."

Mr Hague leered that Mr Blair had no principles. Mr Blair scoffed that Mr Hague could not even give orders to his leader in the Lords.

In the end Mr Hague said likely that Labour wanted to turn the peers into a House of Cronies, and Mr Blair said: "Your cronies in the Lords agree with me."

When the sketchwriters recovered, we agreed that Mr Blair had won the day. But the sweetest victory must be the utter confusion in the Tory ranks.

Short ignores brief to boost trade with China

Simon Cooper

CLARE Short, the International Development Secretary, last week refused to lobby for British companies during her recent trip to China.

Ms Short said her officials had asked her to try to win business for British firms. In an interview on ITV, the minister said: "Within my briefing there was some suggestion that I might raise the fact that that was around. I didn't bother."

Ms Short went on to say she did not consider it her duty to talk to Chinese government about potential business deals. "China and any other country should be the most marginalised project that is on offer," she said.

John Besham, the shadow trade secretary, called on Tony Blair to "discipline Clare Short and tell all ministers that they must help business men, women and children at taxpayers' expense".

A spokeswoman for the Confederation of British Industry said the Prime Minister's visit to China in April had already flown the flag for British firms.

"The CBI sees the role of the Prime Minister and other government ministers as facilitators in identifying and developing trade between the UK and China. However, it does not look to the promote individual companies."

Jenny Tongue, the Liberal Democrat spokeswoman for international development, said Ms Short was "quite right" to keep trade and "quite right" to add that "of course where aid is not involved ministers and MPs of all parties should be ambassadors for British business abroad."

Pinochet law lord linked to Amnesty

James Wilson and Nick Hopkins

ONE of the law lords who ruled that General Augusto Pinochet should face trial for human rights atrocities is a director of a charity affiliated to Amnesty International, it emerged this week.

Amnesty has admitted that Lord Hoffman — who last week was at the centre of allegations over his wife's links with the human rights organisation — has been an unpaid director of Amnesty International's Charity Ltd for seven years.

Although the organisation insisted that Lord Hoffman's work with the charity was entirely unrelated to its campaign to liberate Pinochet extradited to Spain, the revelations could not have come at a worse time.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, must decide by Friday whether to allow the extradition process to start or to send the former Chilean dictator home, and his deliberations are at a delicate stage.

Lord Hoffman's seven-year involvement with the charity was concealed by Amnesty on Monday in a letter to Kingsley Napley, the solicitors acting for Gen Pinochet.



Lord Hoffman: an unpaid Amnesty director for seven years

who had demanded from them details of his links with the organisation.

Amnesty also admitted that in 1997 Lord Hoffman was involved in an Amnesty fund-raising appeal for a new building for the organisation in Britain.

According to Amnesty, the Lord Chief Justice, Lordingham, who originally ruled in the High Court that Gen Pinochet had immunity from the jurisdiction of the English courts, was also involved in this appeal.

The general's lawyers are already seeking to overturn the House of Lords' ruling against Gen Pinochet on the grounds that Lord Hoffman's wife, Gillian, is an administrative assistant with the human rights organisation in London. Submissions sent to Mr Straw claim that Lady Hoffman's position puts into question the validity of the law lords' ruling.

Amnesty has been one of the most vociferous organisations in the campaign to extradite the former dictator to Spain.

Amnesty International Charity Ltd was set up in 1986 after Amnesty tried and failed to win charitable status for its entire operation. It was established to pay for research and educational work on human rights issues and is funded by donations from individuals.

Its directors include Lord Hoffman and Peter Duff QC — and the company secretary, Stuart Whitehead, are not salaried, and meet periodically to review finances and prioritise future projects.

A spokesman for Amnesty said: "The involvement of senior legal figures, including Lords Hoffman and Duff, in the charity was a matter of public record and we were surprised when Gen Pinochet's defence wrote to us about it. If Gen Pinochet's team are raising this question now, it is a sign of how desperate they have become."



Way forward... Karen and Stephen Armstrong who survived the August bomb on August 15, with newborn Lucy at Altnagelvin hospital in Derry last weekend

IRA reviews arms logjam

John Mullin

THE IRA leadership last weekend staged a rare conference to assess the logjam over the decommissioning of terrorist weapons which is threatening the Good Friday agreement.

Security sources said the two-day meeting took place in Co. Cavan, just inside the republic. About 60 delegates were involved, but there is no indication of the outcome.

IRA army conventions are unusual. The last one, in May, paved the way for Sinn Féin to take up its places in the Northern Ireland assembly. A similar change would be needed if the IRA was to embrace decommissioning, which is banned under its constitution.

The meeting came as Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, repeated his criticism of First Minister David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists. He accused him of backtracking on an agreement brokered by Tony Blair last week on the make-up of Northern Ireland's institutions and cross-border bodies.

Mr Trimble meanwhile warned that the province could be facing a rerun of the Sunningdale fiasco of 1974 — the last attempt at devolution. He said the reason the power-

In Brief

FORMER Tory cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken is to stand trial at the Old Bailey on charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice relating to the collapse in June last year of his High Court libel action against the Guardian and Granada TV's World In Action.

POLICE officers who were traumatised by attending to victims after the 1989 Hillsborough disaster lost a landmark £100,000 of compensation that is threatening the rights of emergency service workers to claim damages for psychological injuries.

THE Office of Fair Trading is investigating Camelot after complaints that the National Lottery operator has used unfair tactics to squeeze out competitors to its Instant scratchcard.

POLICE were forced to justify their decision to deploy more than 500 police officers in the largest drugs operation London has seen when it emerged that it had netted only £240,000 worth of cannabis.

SCIENTISTS have warned that the chlorella's favourite drug, Ecstasy, could trigger long-term damage to vital brain cells called astrocytes, neurons, which control moods.

THE St John Ambulance has launched an inquiry after three men were jailed for sexual abuse of eunuchs over a 23-year period.

PLANS to reduce the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg are to be abandoned by the Government to allow police to concentrate on persistent drivers who ignore the present limit.

MORE than half the solicitors found guilty of mismanaging clients' money continue in practice, according to the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal.

FAMILY doctor Harold Shipman has been charged with murdering two more of his home patients, bringing to eight the number of charges he faces.

FORMER hostages Camilla Carr and Jon James, who were held in September after being held for 14 months by Chechen rebels, are to marry in the spring.

PROPOSED changes to speed up house buying would mean sellers having to meet much more of the costs of a sale, including an information pack with a survey. But the housing industry warned that the changes would have to be compensatory.

THE Rev Dr John Brown, the father of Charles Gordon Brown, has died at the age of 84.

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Rail firm charged with manslaughter

Keith Harper

GREAT Western, an operator of the former InterCity trains, was last week served with seven charges of corporate manslaughter over the 1997 Southall rail crash in which seven people died.

The company faces unlimited fines for the accident, which happened when a Swanscombe to London Great Western express collided with an empty freight train at Southall, west London, in September. The freight train had been crossing the line in the path of the express.

The legal case is the most serious to be brought since rail privatisation and follows a long investigation by the British Transport Police.

In another case still pending, Railtrack and two unnamed officials are facing manslaughter charges for causing the death of a train driver who was hit by a passing train while making a trackside telephone call at Longsight, Manchester.

No charges have been laid against any employees for the Southall accident, in which 137 people were injured. But the driver of the passenger train, Larry Harrison, is due to appear in court this week on manslaughter charges.

Meanwhile Railtrack is expected to be ordered to improve safety standards after a year-long inquiry into the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has found that Railtrack consistently fails to meet the Railways Inspectorate's standards. Its

report is likely to lead to the Government handing rail safety controls to an independent body outside Railtrack, the privatised company that maintains the track and infrastructure.

Prohibition notices issued by the Railways Inspectorate rose from four to 10 in the past year. Notices are issued as a last resort when the infrastructure becomes a danger to the public and railway staff.

The order for improved safety standards comes on the 10th anniversary of the Clapham rail crash, in which 35 people died. A family signal circuit was blamed for that accident. The HSE will tell Railtrack to fit a new train protection and warning system throughout the railways at a cost of £152 million.

Transmission beacons will be placed on the track to trigger emergency braking if a train is about to pass a red signal. The system is said to provide a higher degree of train protection, and might have prevented the Southall crash. It does not give the same guarantees for safety as Automatic Train Protection, one of the main recommendations after the Clapham accident. But the system, which operates on Eurorail services, was rejected by both British Rail and Railtrack as too expensive. It would cost up to £1 billion to install.

The HSE's final move will be to order the withdrawal of all slam-door carriages by 2007. It says the stock is far too old and "its crashworthiness falls well below modern standards".

Local polls could run fox hunters to ground

Larry Ward

THE idea of holding local polls on hunting, based on the principle that it would be banned unless its supporters persuaded voters otherwise, is to be backed by ministers. The move to put the issue on local supporters to fight for the right to hunt locally — rather than forcing opponents to mobilise backing to nullify it — would please critics of hunting, who now believe referenda are the best route for the Government to take in reflecting pressure from Labour MPs for a ban.

Discussions are going on between the Home Secretary Jack Straw and MPs keen to end fox hunting to thrust out details of a referendum scheme. The key sticking

points are whether ballots should be based on opting in or opting out of a nationwide blanket hunting ban, the geographical area covered by a referendum, and the way a ballot should be triggered.

But the suggestion that the presumption would be a ban unless local areas fought for an exemption infuriated hunting supporters, who oppose referendum proposals and want "politics removed from the issue altogether".

MPs, including Michael Foster, the Labour member for Worcester, whose private member's bill to outlaw hunting with hounds failed to secure a second reading, have held about half dozen meetings with Mr Straw and other Home Office ministers since March.

MPs made clear at a meeting with

the Home Secretary that they expected quick government action to ban hunting. Cite Cley, the chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, devised a referendum scheme.

As well as the nature of the referendum, talks have focused on the size of the area covered by a poll. There are five possible options, ranging from a parish — widely agreed to be too small an administrative unit — through district council areas, counties and police force areas (which can include several counties), to regions such as the South West or West Midlands.

The likeliest remains the county-wide ballot. Opponents of hunting are concerned that in larger areas more people would feel distant from the issue and would not vote.

Romanian refugees housed in hospital

Rory Carroll

SIXTY Romanian women and children on Monday bedded down on camp beds in a disused hospital ward, huddled by a fierce winter wind.

Protests by Kent residents at the decision to house the asylum seekers at a hospital — albeit in an unheated 1960s sanatorium isolation unit — were greeted with a shrug. The sick English woman, through

critical, Dartford, Kent, tried to defuse criticism that an overstretched health service should not be accommodating people who enter Britain illegally, and predicted they would be moved by the end of the week.

A straw poll of Dartford locals suggested most were convinced that patients had been existed to make room for the Romanians, even though the ward was closed two years ago because there was no lift.

The women and children were among 103 Gypsies found hidden in a lorry at the Dartford freight terminal on December 3, the biggest group to enter Britain illegally. The

42 men are being held in detention centres by the immigration service. Most of the asylum seekers came from Tandra, a village in east Romania, said Dan Dumitriu, a translator working for social services.

They fled to Britain to escape persecution from police and government agencies, said Tamese Simina, aged 35, with six children. "They didn't like us. They wanted us to go, go away, go anywhere. The journey was horrible."

The Government plans to fine truck drivers £2,000 if their lorries are found to contain illegal immigrants as a way to curb



Animal rights protesters in York last week supporting Harry Horne's hunger strike

Hunger striker defiant over animal rights

Animal rights campaigner

Harry Horne is on the verge of slipping into a coma after nearly nine weeks on hunger strike, critics said. Mr Horne is determined to fast until a royal commission is announced to look into animal welfare, which Labour promised to support before the 1997 election. "I remain determined to expose this Government's lies and

hypocrisy in breaching its pre-election promises."

He repeated that he would call off his protest if the Government agreed to set up a royal commission "or similar independent body" to examine animal experiment issues.

Horne, aged 44, is in York hospital. He was moved from Full Sutton Prison, East Yorkshire, where he is serving 18 years for

rebelling against animal rights

Friends believe he is unlikely to last the week as his pre-woman levels have fallen dangerously low. He has lost vision in one eye and hearing in one ear.

The Animal Rights Unit said it was of assistance to supporters of his strike. It said security has been stepped up at animal testing laboratories.

Doctors 'close ranks' over negligence cases

Sarah Bosley and Audrey Gillan

VICTIMS of medical negligence, their families and lawyers are calling for fundamental reforms to the National Health Service complaints procedure and for doctors and hospitals to admit their mistakes and apologise when things go wrong.

A Guardian investigation has discovered there is disquiet at the highest levels at the refusal of doctors to be open with patients who have accidentally been harmed. There is particular concern about the distress suffered by families who have lost a child and, in spite of years of asking, have never been told how their son or daughter died.

The massive payments and protracted battles by hospitals in the civil courts to some patients — usually those left with brain damage or profound disability needing a lifetime of care — make the plight of parents who can by law be awarded no more than £2,500 in compensation for a child's life. Once a hospital has paid this sum into court, often without even admitting liability or saying sorry, the family loses legal aid and has nowhere else to go.

Lawyers agree the medical profession closes ranks, either afraid or unable to say sorry.

Revels Levy, of Leigh Day, believes that the whole culture of medicine is at fault. "Doctors have the incredible fear of criticism and lit-

igation... Focusing on what has happened really will prevent things happening and far fewer people will want to complain and consider litigation."

Doctors have the protection of the law in their refusal to reveal exact details, as Mr Powell discovered after the death of 10-year-old son Robbie. He took the local GPs to court, suing for the trauma he claimed he and his wife had suffered as a result of what he claims to be the cover-up over Robbie's death.

The doctors applied for the case to be struck out. "They said they didn't have any obligation to tell me the full truth about my son," he says.

The High Court supported Mr Powell, but the Appeal Court backed the doctors and the House of Lords refused to hear his appeal. He is now taking the case to the European Court, claiming an infringement of his civil liberties. The General Medical Council, following the Powell judgment, told doctors that they had a moral obligation, if not a legal one, to be frank with patients.

"The number of people living to see their children following the Powell judgment, told doctors that they had a moral obligation, if not a legal one, to be frank with patients."

The Government is cutting waiting lists for operations — in pursuit of its pre-election promise to reduce them by 200,000 only by allowing backlogs to build up elsewhere.

Colour test for cervical cancer

Sarah Bosley

A TEST developed at Cambridge University may end the scandals that broke over cervical screening. The Cancer Research Campaign claimed this week.

The test is a refinement of the screening process. Although it is only at a very early stage — it has been tried on only 58 smear slides — the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, promised he would find the money to introduce it nationwide in the next three years of clinical trials bore out its potential.

The scientists have found a way of marking abnormal cells on a smear slide in a different colour so that they stand out.

Screening saves the lives of about 4,000 women a year by detecting the early changes in precancerous cells. But, said Nick Coleman, lecturer in pathology at Cambridge, there are 500,000 to 500,000 cells per slide. In a 15-minute examination under a microscope "abnormalities are extremely easy to miss with the standard test".

The test has emerged from work on the way in which DNA replicates

itself. The scientists — Ron Laskey, Gareth Williams and Dr Coleman — have found a way of using antibodies to home in on proteins, called Cdc6 and Mcm5, which are only present in cells with a replicating. Cervical smear cells should not be dividing, so any with these molecules must be potentially cancerous.

The antibodies can be stained with a fluorescent or coloured dye, marking out abnormal cells. In the past, the scientists had a 100 per cent success in detecting abnormalities that they knew were there, and found abnormal cells on three slides that had been passed by screeners.

"We feel that it should be possible to close the loophole in the existing screening procedure," said Prof Laskey.

The Cancer Research Campaign, which has financed the work over the past 15 years, has spent £50,000 on patenting the test in every country where it may be relevant.

They have signed a contract with a Californian company, diaDexus, which will begin clinical trials in 18 months.

Post Office free to invest

Nicholas Bannister

THE Post Office is to be freed to make big foreign takeovers and to keep more of its huge profits under government proposals announced on Monday. But the commercial freedoms announced by the Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, fall short of those wanted by Post Office management and recommended by a House of Commons select committee.

The PO is to be allowed to borrow money to finance expansion projects — expected to total £1 billion in the next few years — but such schemes will have to be approved by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Treasury.

However, such borrowing will be counted as part of public borrowing, and could leave Mr Mandelson having to fight the Treasury for approval for the money.

In recent years the PO has been powerless as foreign post offices have moved into the British market, competing off international business and taking over companies in the transportation, printing, warehousing and courier business.

Two years ago, for example, the Dutch post office spent more than £1.2 billion buying the TNT global transport business, while the German post office, which owns 25 per cent of the DHL international courier company, this year spent £223 million on a stake in Securix, a parcel operation, and last week acquired a 68 per cent stake in a French parcel distributor.

Mr Mandelson said the PO would have an arm's length relationship with government, which would have to approve the organisation's five-year strategic plan. This would give the PO the freedom to invest, provide commercially and borrow. It would continue to have to deliver letters at a standard price.

Senior PO executives had been hoping Mr Mandelson would go for full or partial privatisation. But they were prepared to settle for the recommendation that the organisation's status should be changed to that of an independent, publicly owned corporation.

Under the new arrangements, the Government will take only 40 per cent of PO profits, compared with about 80 per cent in recent years.

Johnnie Walker

Gadafy still proves elusive

THE Libyan People's Congress, which began one of its rare sessions this week, is expected to consider whether to hand over the two suspects in the Lockerbie case for trial in the Netherlands. This follows Kofi Annan's meeting with Colonel Gadafy last weekend. But it is not clear that a deal is in prospect, even though the United States and Britain have gone a long way toward promising that the Libyan regime will have immunity from the consequences of what it may or may not have done 10 years ago. No witnesses from Libya would be called. Gadafy has been given to understand, and the trial would focus solely on the guilt or innocence of the two men charged with the murder of the 270 people killed when the plane went down. In return for putting the two Lockerbie suspects on the hook, to put it bluntly, Gadafy gets off it — along with any leaders in his country who may have had a hand in Lockerbie. He gets more, in particular an effective end to sanctions. These, while not of great consequence economically, are a political problem for Gadafy because Libya's well-off class resents the isolation they impose and especially the travel difficulties the suspension of all links has created.

Against this the Libyan leader has to weigh the political disadvantages of handing over the two suspects, sacrificing them in a way their families and clan constituencies will presumably resent. The difficulties Gadafy is still apparently making no doubt arise from his assessment of the balance between these two factors. He would have a better chance of offsetting the disadvantages if he could point to a complete lifting of sanctions, but he has been offered only a suspension because of other matters, including a cease-fire in the bombing in which Libya may have been involved. It may be holding out for a complete end to sanctions, while maintaining his demand that, if convicted, the two should not serve their sentence in Scotland. Since he knows that Britain and the United States will never concede this, it gives him an escape route if he decides that a deal at this stage is too dangerous for him politically.

Nato searches for a new role

WHEN Nato's foreign and defence ministers met in Brussels this week, their inquiries about the latest Anglo-French declaration on defence are unlikely to be mimated. Britain's defence secretary, George Robertson, trumpeted the agreement signed at St Malo last week as the start of a new era in defence co-operation. But this new era has the character of a New Year's resolution. It rings with good intentions, has minimal substance, and of course we heard it last year and the year before that. What Nato's other members will be wanting to know is whether any concrete changes were agreed by Britain and France.

There has long been talk of developing a formula for the European countries to develop the Nato burden, both in terms of cash spending and the contribution of men and hardware. Equally, there has long been talk of giving muscle to the European Union's common foreign and security policy. The problem was the relationship between these two. In the days when France refused to play its part in Nato, suggestions for giving Europe its own defence identity were viewed nervously in Washington as a device for developing an alternative to Nato. British governments shared the United States' suspicions, while the Europeans saw the British hesitation as proof of Britain's incoherence and everything continental.

With the end of the cold war a "new era" dawned. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant discussions on Nato's future could take place in a talk about defence. The crises in Bosnia and Kosovo demanded intervention, as well as exposing the weakness of Europe's military structures. Neither Britain nor France could put men without technical intelligence, as the US does. To project more power over a longer distance and keep it engaged for several months would require US transport aircraft and logistical support. The St Malo agreement resolves none of these

difficulties. As a sop to the Americans it talks of the capacity for "autonomous" rather than "independent" action, but does not say what items are to be procured to make that possible. It avoids the thorny issue of Europe's security architecture, and whether the Western European Union, which groups those nations that are members of both Nato and the EU, is to fade away, or grow stronger. Above all, it says nothing about the two major decisions which the US wants the member states to reach by April, when Nato celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The first is whether Nato should expand its shadow to cover the whole of Eurasia, with authority to act anywhere in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and central Asia. The US is pushing for such a shift to get broader automatic backing for its global pretensions. The second point is whether such moves could be undertaken without authorisation from member states. This was an alliance for mutual protection, and any state had the right under Article 5 of the UN charter to use force in self-defence. Nato's issue of UN authorisation was fudged. To go from a single emergency to a permanent change in policy requires a much fairer debate. It would be better not to push it through before April.

To undermine the UN's primacy and turn Nato into a regional or global policeman is an even more dramatic shift than Nato's absorption of three former Warsaw Pact states of central Europe into full membership. This year's Kosovo crisis brought a consensus within Nato for intervention, though the issue of UN authorisation was fudged. To go from a single emergency to a permanent change in policy requires a much fairer debate. It would be better not to push it through before April.

Blair upstages luckless Hague

WILLIAM HAGUE's lucklessness continues to the end of the century. Last week's twist in the saga about his being brought a rare flash of good fortune, as he sprung a surprise on the House of Commons, revealing a backroom deal Labour had apparently sought with the Conservative leadership. Mr Hague hoped to ambush the Prime Minister, seeking to expose him before his own party as a backslider and compromiser on the cherished Labour principle of the removal of the hereditary members from the upper house. For a second the plan appeared to work. Labour backbenchers were instantly hushed as Mr Hague revealed that their leader had covertly plotted to compromise on the principle by allowing a vestigial group of 91 hereditaries to retain their place in Britain's most exclusive club. That should have placed Tony Blair squarely on the receiving end of backbench fury and accusations of sell-out.

But that's not how it worked out. Instead it was a gaudy cracker inside the Conservative party. Far from being forced on to the defensive, Mr Blair was able to attack Mr Hague as utterly at odds with his own leader in the Lords. The Prime Minister skewered the Tory leader both for humiliating his man in the Lords — by overruling him in public — and for exposing himself as less than fully in charge of his own party. Parliament, Mr Hague deeply, Mr Hague has again driven a wholly avoidable wedge through the Conservative party, splitting Tory MPs from Tory peers on the one issue that is likely to dominate the next political year.

The politics, then, Mr Blair got right. But what of the policy? Our own view on hereditary peers has not wavered: we would like them gone from the Lords as a device for developing an alternative to Nato. British governments shared the United States' suspicions, while the Europeans saw the British hesitation as proof of Britain's incoherence and everything continental. With the end of the cold war a "new era" dawned. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant discussions on Nato's future could take place in a talk about defence. The crises in Bosnia and Kosovo demanded intervention, as well as exposing the weakness of Europe's military structures. Neither Britain nor France could put men without technical intelligence, as the US does. To project more power over a longer distance and keep it engaged for several months would require US transport aircraft and logistical support. The St Malo agreement resolves none of these

The Lords are all convinced that the plan represents the only way this vital reform can happen, without falling victim to ermine guerrilla warfare, then it is an irrefragable but acceptable compromise. Progressives must remain vigilant, however, watching to ensure the 91 escapees do not quietly become part of the Lords' furniture — unless, of course, they are democratically chosen.

The Lords' compromise appears to have been a good day's work by a busy body. The Tories are in disarray, their leader badly shaken. It is an essential piece of constitutional reform may have a better life expectancy than before.

Noose tightens for the architects of evil

Martin Woollacott

WHEN General Radislav Krstic appeared in court in The Hague on Monday, the proceedings of the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia underwent a qualitative change. The tribunal has grown in stature since its foundation, but it needed to deal with suspects who had overall command responsibility rather than individuals personally involved in torture and killing. Krstic is the first senior officer or politician suspected of such overall responsibility for war crimes to come before the court.

It is not only that the Bosnian Serb general, arrested by United States troops last week, commanded the units which took Srebrenica in 1995 and whose soldiers, or some of them, were then responsible for the worst single atrocity of the Bosnian war. Nor that the Dutch people will fasten on every detail of his evidence for whatever light it can throw on the behaviour of their own soldiers, the United Nations' gross violation of the Srebrenica safe area who so signally failed to protect it.

What Krstic could also provide is information going beyond his own role to illuminate the responsibility of General Ratko Mladic, to whom Krstic reported directly, of Radovan Karadzic, and of senior people in Belgrade, up to and including Slobodan Milosevic himself.

The trail that leads to these men is already heavy with clues. But by bringing certain connections into the open, the examination of Krstic may not only seal the fate of Mladic and Karadzic, but make it impossible for the contradictory and repugnant Western and Russian policy of dealing with Milosevic as a partner as well as an adversary to continue for much longer. In this way the tribunal could become, as many of its supporters envisaged from the start, an instrument not only of justice, but of enforcement and intervention in former Yugoslavia as potent in its way as military force or economic sanctions.

Once again last week the dismal chance of treating the man most responsible for the Balkan wars as if he were a responsible statesman was exposed. In the words of Christopher Hill, the US mediator in Kosovo, handed Milosevic a draft peace plan. Milosevic handed Hill a copy of his own party's platform, and asked him to study the respective demands. There may be no practical alternative to such encounters for the time being, but the context of Western and Russian policy-making is changing.

In the US the argument that there can be no fundamental improvement in either Bosnia or Kosovo until the regime in Belgrade is gaining more support. The State Department spokesman, Robert Duggan, said last week that the US policy of isolating Milosevic in power by supporting the Serbian leader was part of the problem rather than part of the solution, and that he is a guarantor of stability in Kosovo. Rubini's remarks produced a predictable flurry of attacks on the US in the controlled press in Russia, where the government re-

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Bridge over troubled waters

Its Bosphorus crossing links Europe and Asia, yet despite Turkey's geopolitical importance and long membership of Nato, it batters in vain on Europe's door. Stephen Bates and Martin Walker ask if Ankara deserves ostracism from the Brussels club

IT IS ironic that Europe's leaders come to meet in Vienna this week to discuss their worsening relations with Turkey. Ever since the Turks first laid siege to the city in 1529 there has been a legacy of misunderstanding, mistrust and mutual incomprehension between them and western Europeans.

The choice of Vienna was accidental — Austria currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union — but it was significant that this has been one of the most difficult years for the European-Turkish relationship.

The European Commission's decision to open the Turkish border to the Islamic faith, but it is a secular state, allied and strategically oriented to the West, with elected civilian governments, democratic procedures, an independent judiciary, free markets and a free press.

This makes Turkey virtually unique in the Islamic world, and offers an important alternative model of pro-Western democracy to the growing numbers of Arabs who suspect that their countries do not have to be run in the way they have been.

Turkey's long wall was not cased last year when Helmut Kohl, the then German chancellor, chose a meeting of Christian Democratic leaders in Brussels to announce firmly that as far as he was concerned Turkey could never join the EU.

"Turkish membership of the EU is not possible," he said. What he was really worried about was immigration. There are an estimated 3 million Turks living in the EU (out of its population of 11 million). One worker in four in the German car industry is Turkish. Although per capita gross domestic product is only a third of the EU average and inflation approached 70 per cent last year, Turkey is growing fast: exports have risen by more than 20 per cent since 1995, half of which, now go to Europe. Agriculture's share of gross national product, a key traditional indicator, is down to 14 per cent. This is despite a trade loss averaging \$7 billion a year since links to Iraq were cut after the Gulf war. Cutting off the Iraqi oil pipeline has cost Turkey \$27 billion since 1991, and a third of its 300,000-strong forestry fleet has had to find alternative work. As a senior EU diplomat remarked: "Turkey has proved a reliable ally internationally. It has adhered to United Nations sanctions despite the cost. It is the worlds only real Muslim democracy. It is a large and stable middle class. It is a country you will be regarded with hostility by immigrants, all lumped together as 'the Turks', never insisting on the controlled presence in the alliance, and its pivotal position for nearly 40 years, for all many

Europeans care, could wait another 40. It joined the queue in 1959, way before Britain, but, following a decision at the Luxembourg summit late last year, it has been placed effectively last. It looks as if it will not be admitted until well into the next millennium after Kommis and Bulgaria — countries with much less secure economic and political bases.

This is despite Turkey's important strategic position, no less so now than in the cold war. It controls the water supply to neighbours such as Syria, and commands the likely pipeline routes for the world's second untapped oil fields in Azerbaijan. Turkey's problem was that its latest bid to join the EU followed the end of the cold war. As President Suleyman Demirel remarked bluntly: "When the industrialised European civilisation (against communism) was at stake, they didn't say we were Turks and Muslims."

The European Commission concludes that the country is well on the way to qualifying for admission on economic grounds. "Turkey has all the hallmarks of a market economy, possessing a well-developed institutional and legislative framework, a dynamic private sector and liberal trade rules. The economy has considerable potential for growth and has shown great adaptability, which has contributed significantly to its modernisation."

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only exit to open seas, explains the long indulgence the country enjoyed throughout the cold war. The United States' subsequent decision to dominate the entire Mediterranean and Central Asia, can launch air strikes and patrols against Iraq, and provide pipeline routes for oil from the Caspian basin that will not have to use the Russian pipeline monopoly. The direct military co-operation between Turkey and Israel, with joint exercises and freedom to train in Turkish airspace — a second bonus for Washington.

There is a further factor, one that Richard Perle, former assistant secretary at the Pentagon, suggests may be the most important of all at a time of American worries about Islamic fundamentalism. "Turkey is a country where most people subscribe to the Islamic faith, but it is a secular state, allied and strategically oriented to the West, with elected civilian governments, democratic procedures, an independent judiciary, free markets and a free press."

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Atatürk and after

1914 Ottoman empire allied with Axis Powers — 1934 Kemal (Kavram) Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkey — 1938 Atatürk died — 1938-1945 Turkish Republic during second world war — 1945-1946 Atatürk's death — 1946-1947 Atatürk's death — 1947-1948 Atatürk's death — 1948-1949 Atatürk's death — 1949-1950 Atatürk's death — 1950-1951 Atatürk's death — 1951-1952 Atatürk's death — 1952-1953 Atatürk's death — 1953-1954 Atatürk's death — 1954-1955 Atatürk's death — 1955-1956 Atatürk's death — 1956-1957 Atatürk's death — 1957-1958 Atatürk's death — 1958-1959 Atatürk's death — 1959-1960 Atatürk's death — 1960-1961 Atatürk's death — 1961-1962 Atatürk's death — 1962-1963 Atatürk's death — 1963-1964 Atatürk's death — 1964-1965 Atatürk's death — 1965-1966 Atatürk's death — 1966-1967 Atatürk's death — 1967-1968 Atatürk's death — 1968-1969 Atatürk's death — 1969-1970 Atatürk's death — 1970-1971 Atatürk's death — 1971-1972 Atatürk's death — 1972-1973 Atatürk's death — 1973-1974 Atatürk's death — 1974-1975 Atatürk's death — 1975-1976 Atatürk's death — 1976-1977 Atatürk's death — 1977-1978 Atatürk's death — 1978-1979 Atatürk's death — 1979-1980 Atatürk's death — 1980-1981 Atatürk's death — 1981-1982 Atatürk's death — 1982-1983 Atatürk's death — 1983-1984 Atatürk's death — 1984-1985 Atatürk's death — 1985-1986 Atatürk's death — 1986-1987 Atatürk's death — 1987-1988 Atatürk's death — 1988-1989 Atatürk's death — 1989-1990 Atatürk's death — 1990-1991 Atatürk's death — 1991-1992 Atatürk's death — 1992-1993 Atatürk's death — 1993-1994 Atatürk's death — 1994-1995 Atatürk's death — 1995-1996 Atatürk's death — 1996-1997 Atatürk's death — 1997-1998 Atatürk's death — 1998-1999 Atatürk's death — 1999-2000 Atatürk's death — 2000-2001 Atatürk's death — 2001-2002 Atatürk's death — 2002-2003 Atatürk's death — 2003-2004 Atatürk's death — 2004-2005 Atatürk's death — 2005-2006 Atatürk's death — 2006-2007 Atatürk's death — 2007-2008 Atatürk's death — 2008-2009 Atatürk's death — 2009-2010 Atatürk's death — 2010-2011 Atatürk's death — 2011-2012 Atatürk's death — 2012-2013 Atatürk's death — 2013-2014 Atatürk's death — 2014-2015 Atatürk's death — 2015-2016 Atatürk's death — 2016-2017 Atatürk's death — 2017-2018 Atatürk's death — 2018-2019 Atatürk's death — 2019-2020 Atatürk's death — 2020-2021 Atatürk's death — 2021-2022 Atatürk's death — 2022-2023 Atatürk's death — 2023-2024 Atatürk's death — 2024-2025 Atatürk's death — 2025-2026 Atatürk's death — 2026-2027 Atatürk's death — 2027-2028 Atatürk's death — 2028-2029 Atatürk's death — 2029-2030 Atatürk's death — 2030-2031 Atatürk's death — 2031-2032 Atatürk's death — 2032-2033 Atatürk's death — 2033-2034 Atatürk's death — 2034-2035 Atatürk's death — 2035-2036 Atatürk's death — 2036-2037 Atatürk's death — 2037-2038 Atatürk's death — 2038-2039 Atatürk's death — 2039-2040 Atatürk's death — 2040-2041 Atatürk's death — 2041-2042 Atatürk's death — 2042-2043 Atatürk's death — 2043-2044 Atatürk's death — 2044-2045 Atatürk's death — 2045-2046 Atatürk's death — 2046-2047 Atatürk's death — 2047-2048 Atatürk's death — 2048-204

Asia slump forces Boeing to slash jobs

Mark Tran in New York

BOEING, the world's biggest aircraft manufacturer, is to axe up to 48,000 jobs over the next two years — 20,000 more than previously announced — in a move the company compares to the Asian economic crisis.

The US plane maker warned last week that next year's financial results would be sharply down from previous forecasts. The job cuts amount to a 20 percent reduction in Boeing's workforce from 233,000 in June.

The cutback in production is likely to have a big impact on 350 British suppliers. Seventy percent of Boeing's European suppliers are based in Britain.

British Aerospace, which makes main components for the A300-600, and engine-maker Rolls-Royce said it was

too early to tell if any action was needed. Smiths Industries, which manufactures electrical controls for Boeing, has cut back its operations.

Boeing shares plunged on the news, dragging down Wall Street. Analysts say Boeing's decision to scale back production of passenger planes did not surprise Wall Street. But analysts were stunned by the downward revision of profit margins despite cost-cutting. Boeing said its commercial aircraft operating margin for 2000 could be 1 percent to 3 percent, a decline from the 1999 estimate.

Boeing has been offering discounts on its aircraft under in-

tense competitive pressure from Airbus Industrie, the European consortium.

It is still reeling from its decision in 1996 to crank up production to record levels, to meet booming demand from the world's airlines and to win orders against Airbus. But it could not deliver. Costs soared because of overtime payments, and assembly lines ground to a halt because parts did not arrive in time.

Last year Boeing took a \$4.4 billion charge and made a loss of \$178 million, its first in 50 years. It is still committed to delivering 850 planes this year, a record 620 in 1999 and 480 in 2000. Total sales in 1999 should come to \$58 billion, declining to \$50 billion for the following year.

Boeing said it would reduce

production of 747 jettisoners from 3.5 to two aircraft a month late next year, and to one a month in early 2000 if market conditions failed to improve. Production of 757 jets will drop from five to four a month, and the 787 programme will drop from four to three aircraft a month in early 2000.

The latest jobs cuts augur poorly for negotiations between Boeing and its engineers next summer, to replace the present contract which expires next September. Boeing executives admit poor relations with their largest union helped trigger a 69-day walkout three years ago.

The size of the job cuts surprised Boeing employees. Union leaders said they were given no warning. "It's affected everyone pretty badly. Every-

body's scared they're going to get laid off," said a worker on 777 jettisoners at Boeing's Everett assembly plant.

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In Brief

A SPECIAL session of the International Monetary Fund's policymaking Interim Committee is to be convened in Washington next month to implement emergency reforms and help ease a second round of global economic turbulence.

The move comes amid signs of the recent recovery in world markets is still fragile. Meanwhile, the World Bank said that more than a quarter of the population of developing countries — just over a billion people — will suffer falling living standards as a result of the crisis.

EUROPE'S central bankers ended months of complacency over the likely threat to the European economy from the global financial crisis when they announced a co-ordinated cut in interest rates, designed to boost growth and jobs across the continent. Germany and France led the way, cutting the cost of borrowing to 3 percent, and only slightly remained out of line, settling on a rate of 3.5 percent.

THE creation of the world's largest industrial company was confirmed with the \$77.2 billion alliance of Exxon and Mobil. The two groups will save \$2.8 billion from their combined operating costs of \$34 billion. The merger comes at a time when oil companies face a double bind — the lowest oil prices in more than 10 years and rising exploration costs.

Washington Post, page 1.

EC drove forward its "strategic realignment" under chief executive Sir John Giddens, announcing 1,500 job losses in low-tech areas of its telecom and defence electronics business.

LEAING shareholders in Barclays are understood to be telling the bank's top executives that they should consider a sale of the bank's retail and corporate banking businesses.

ROYAL Bank of Scotland reported profits of just over £1.6 billion for the year ended in 1999, a record achieved by a Scottish company.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

Starting rates December 7

London 2.604/2.605 2.605/2.606

Australia 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Belgium 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Canada 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Denmark 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

France 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Germany 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Italy 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Japan 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Netherlands 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Portugal 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Spain 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Sweden 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

Switzerland 2.08/2.09 2.09/2.10

USA 1.000/1.001 1.001/1.002

UK 1.41/1.42 1.42/1.43

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Irate Jurors Give Notice to Independent Prosecutors

Bill Miller

THE jurors who last week acquitted former agriculture secretary Mike Espy had sharp words for independent prosecutor Donald C. Smaltz, saying his \$17 million corruption case was an outrageous waste of taxpayers' money and an unfair assault on a man they felt was a motivated, effective leader.

"I hope that we sent a message to these independent counsel," said juror Anthony Young, a 49-year-old warehouse worker. "A 49-year-old warehouse worker? Well, the American people don't want any more of these frivolous, petty cases. Seventeen million dollars for this? This was a travesty. Mr. Espy could have been one of the greatest agriculture secretaries ever," he continued. "This was the weakest, most bogus thing I ever saw. I can't believe Mr. Smaltz ever brought this to trial."

Although some were more measured in their criticisms, four other jurors echoed Young's views, saying they sat for seven weeks in U.S. District Court waiting for evidence to emerge showing that Espy illegally took gifts from businesses and individuals. But time and again, they said, Smaltz failed to demonstrate that Espy had any criminal intent in taking sports tickets and other items and delivered no proof that Espy bestowed any favors. By the trial's end, some jurors said they were wondering why Espy was forced out of office by the White House in 1994 for what seemed a few errors in judgment.

"I tried to really understand what they were getting at," said Adrienne White-Powell, a 20-year-old office clerk. "I don't think it was until the second or third week that I started to realize that this was a bunch of bull."

White-Powell said she came to view Espy, who took office in 1993 as the nation's first African-American agriculture secretary, as a hard-driven public servant who was "working for the people." Smaltz, meanwhile, seemed to be strutting to make a case.

"He was just the worst," she said. "Even his closing argument — I was like, 'What is your purpose? What are you there for?'"

Smaltz did not return calls to his office seeking his version of the trial. But one of his assistants, William S. Nokes Jr., acknowledged, "If you draw anything from

the jurors' comments, it is that we could have done the case in a clearer, simpler way and done a better job of tying it all up."

Espy was accused of illegally accepting roughly \$35,000 in gifts from companies such as Tyson Foods Inc., Sun-Diamond Growers of California, Quaker Oats Co., and others. Jurors said prosecutors failed to show that Espy took any thing "for or because of official acts," a key element to proving he violated gratuities laws. They said many of the items seemed to be given to Espy as acts of friendship. "I had likened the portrait the prosecution was painting to a 'connect-the-dots' picture," said Diane Clayton-Koonz, 37, a mortgage banker and the jury's foreperson. "Smaltz was placing the dots but never connecting them."

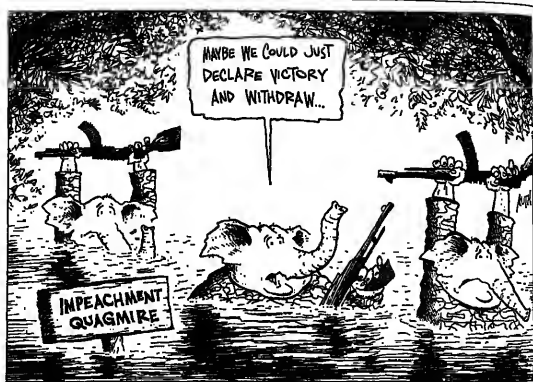
She said Smaltz appeared to use tremendous financial resources in bringing 38 charges in hopes that one would stick, and contended that more control should be placed on independent counsel. "I can't focus on pursuing the case with the zeal he pursued it because nobody ever stopped him," she said.

Defense lawyers Ted Wells and Reid H. Wapner had portrayed Espy as a trail-blazer, noting he was the first African-American elected to Congress in his native Mississippi since Reconstruction, and that he then made history at USDA. Two of Smaltz's witnesses described the agriculture department as a racist place.

"That kind of testimony deeply concerned Smaltz. During the trial, he protested to Judge Ricardo M. Urbina that the defense was injecting race into the trial in what he saw as an attempt to sway a black jury. Of the 12 people who ultimately decided the case, all but one were black. Defense lawyers denied playing any race cards, and the judge declined Smaltz's request to remove the jury that race was not an issue in this trial."

"That irritates me — some people are trying to pin some type of bias on this, and that wasn't the case," Clayton-Koonz said. "There was no one in that deliberation room who said, 'I want to acquit him because I did sorry for him.' And his being black was not the issue. Many jurors were very incisive but had gotten himself into this position because of poor judgment."

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Censure Is the Best Option

EDITORIAL

THE House impeachment inquiry now winding down had two main purposes. One was to underscore the fact that the president had lied under oath; the other was to establish whether he had gone further and obstructed justice by causing others to give false testimony, withhold evidence, etc.

The first issue of lying, rests precisely where it did when the proceedings began. The committee Republicans appear determined to send one or more articles of impeachment regarding lying to the floor. That seems right to us. Before the recent mid-term elections, all but five members of the House thought there ought to be an inquiry. Now they should be the judge of the proceeds.

On the issue of whether the president obstructed justice the Judiciary Committee has failed utterly to establish any record who said, "I want to acquit him because I did sorry for him." And his being black was not the issue. Many jurors were very incisive but had gotten himself into this position because of poor judgment."

other evidence insufficient to remove a president from office. The committee, having developed no additional evidence, should drop the obstruction and related charges, as well as the president's ideological enmity in an effort to bring him down. It weakens the country if a president can be dislodged so easily. No matter that he could have avoided all the harm, prevented the entire occurrence, had he simply chosen to say forthrightly "yes" instead of "no," and the whole instead of thinking he could once more duck it.

Some Republicans want to deny the House a chance to vote on censure. They think the case for impeachment will be strengthened if they deny such an alternative. It's the House's prerogative to conduct these proceedings; this is one issue on which the House ought not be cornered. It ought to be free to get to the result it wants.

Tough censure is not the perfect outcome here. But on the basis of the evidence as assembled by the independent counsel and committee, we gratefully conclude that censure best describes the case.

Mr. Clinton is flawed; he was also re-elected, and it is no small thing to reverse a national election result. The case now rests on personal behavior, which is a personal degree was used by the president's ideological enmity in an effort to bring him down. It weakens the country if a president can be dislodged so easily. No matter that he could have avoided all the harm, prevented the entire occurrence, had he simply chosen to say forthrightly "yes" instead of "no," and the whole instead of thinking he could once more duck it.

The conclusion of Exxon and Mobil establishes a top tier in the oil industry, which is already dominated by expanding giants like British Petroleum (which is in the midst of buying Amoco) and the Royal Dutch/Shell Group, which recently merged its U.S. marketing operations with Texaco Inc. Analysts say the Exxon-Mobil merger will only speed the oil industry's trend from big to behemoth.

"Well, come out of this with three, four or five big private companies and a bunch of state oil companies," said Philip Verleger, an oil industry consultant with Boston's Brattle Group. "If you want a paradigm, look at the airline industry: we saw 20 or so private companies contract into four or five and a few national carriers."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1995

Size Matters, Say Oil Giants

Steven Mufson

PETROLEUM geologists have trekked to the frozen Arctic, the blazing Arabian deserts, the jungles of South America and the hurricane-prone waters of the Gulf of Mexico in search of what they call "elephants," the giant oil reservoirs that can become money mines for big oil companies.

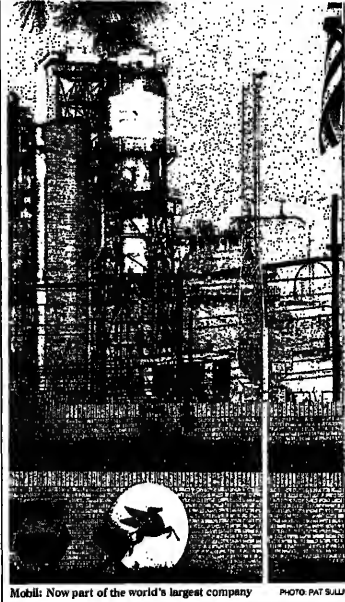
But last week Exxon Corp. found an elephant in a less harsh environment: the board room of Mobil Corp. For a price of \$81 billion in Exxon stock and assumed debt, Exxon obtained 4.1 billion barrels of crude oil reserves, almost as much again in natural gas reserves, and an array of oil refineries, gasoline stations and chemical businesses.

With that stroke, it created the world's largest company and gave new meaning to the phrase "Big Oil," which critics often use to describe the richest oil firms. The combined Exxon-Mobil will have crude oil production that outstrips Nigeria or any one of several other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Its revenue will be bigger than the gross domestic product of all but 23 countries. It will be the world's largest retailer of gasoline, with about 47,500 stations. And it will have a profit of nearly \$12 billion.

Despite the huge size of the new company, Exxon and Mobil executives say the goal of the merger is self-preservation rather than domination. Engulfed by a slump in oil prices, faced with the ever-present pressure to replace oil reserves, and confronted by recent mergers among their rivals, the two giants say they can better compete together than separately.

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Mobil: Now part of the world's largest company PHOTO BY SULLIVAN

dation is driven by survival, making the oil industry perhaps the richest industry ever to cry poor.

Oil prices, when adjusted for inflation, are at their lowest level since the Great Depression, says Daniel Yergin, author of *The Price*, a history of the oil industry. The balance between supply and demand has

been turned on its head. Asia's economic slump, Iraq's partial return to oil markets, increased supplies from west Africa, and increased natural gas usage has knocked the bottom out of the oil market. That has squeezed profit margins at the big oil companies despite technology-driven reductions in costs.

Some industry critics fear the emergence of the new leviathans will mean higher prices for consumers by reducing competition in gasoline retailing. They say studies show that prices are significantly higher in places like San Diego, where there are fewer gasoline retailers, than in Los Angeles, where there are more.

Exxon-Mobil combined would have a 16.8 percent share of the U.S. gasoline market, according to the Petroleum Finance Co., a consultants firm. Moreover, the three biggest firms — BP-Amoco, Shell-Texaco, and Exxon-Mobil — would dominate the American market with a 38 percent share. Because they usually focus on certain markets, the share could be larger in certain places. Mobil has a 9 percent national market share, but it only markets gasoline in 28 states.

But oil executives and many analysts argue that the current consoli-

AIDS Threatens to Wipe Out 50 Years of Progress

Lester K. Brown

WHEN United Nations demographic projections last October, they shocked the world. The projections were substantially lower, partly because of AIDS' devastating toll. The massive rise in deaths now predicted in many countries marks a tragic new development in world demography.

These projections are the first to use the World Health Organization's new data on HIV infection rates in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, a staggering one-fifth to one-fourth of the adult population is HIV-positive. In Zimbabwe, it is 36 percent; Botswana 25 percent; and Zambia, Swaziland and Malawi 18 to 20 percent.

Barring a medical miracle, these countries will lose one-fifth or more of their adult population to AIDS within the next decade. To find a precedent, we must go back to the 19th century, when smallpox devastated New World Indians, or to the 14th century, when roughly a third of Europe's population died of bubonic plague.

Industrial countries have been able to hold HIV infection rates among the adult population under 1 percent, but rates are soaring in developing countries, where governments often cannot master the leadership energy and fiscal resources to cope.

Social problems routinely managed in industrial societies are becoming full-scale humanitarian crises in many developing ones. As a result, some of the latter are now headed for population stability or even decline in a matter of years, not because of falling birthrates but because of fast-rising death rates.

Rising AIDS fatalities could bring Zimbabwe's population growth to a halt as early as 2002. Life expectancy in Botswana is projected to drop from the historic high of 61 years in 1990 to 41 years in 2000.

In addition to adult deaths from

AIDS, some 30 percent of infants of HIV-positive mothers are born with the virus; their life expectancy is two years. The epidemic is also creating a new population subset — AIDS orphans, already numbering 7.8 million in sub-Saharan Africa. The epidemic's social and economic effects are just starting to materialize. Unlike most potentially fatal infectious diseases, AIDS takes its toll not so much among the very young and the elderly but among young professionals — the very engineers, agronomists and teachers needed to develop the economy. Indeed, the precipitous drop in life expectancy, the surest indicator of economic development, could erase half a century of progress almost overnight. (See "Beyond Malnutrition" at www.worldwatch.com.)

Two lessons need to be learned. One, the key to curbing the disease early before it spreads out of control and two, population growth must be slowed before demographic fatigue overwhelms even more governments.

Thailand and Uganda, where the epidemic was treated as an emergency, successfully curbed the virus spread through an intensive educational effort and the free distribution of condoms.

Family planning programs and condom distribution are keys to controlling the spread of infection, but just days before the U.N. projections were released, a little-noticed amendment — inserted into the budget at the last minute by the U.S. congressional leadership — cut off all funding for the U.N. Population Fund, the chief source of international family planning assistance. Congress, stirred in the quicksand of abortion politics, is depriving developing countries of the help they need.

The HIV epidemic should be seen for what it is: an emergency of epic proportions that could claim more lives early in the next century than from World War II did. Any decision to withhold assistance in controlling it should not be taken lightly.

Quebec Sends Ambiguous Messages to Rest of Canada

OPINION

E.J. Dionne Jr.

CANADIANS are engaged in one of the most remarkable experiments ever undertaken by a democracy: a successful, nearly three-decade-old debate over whether their country should continue to exist.

Quebec's voters made sure the issue will remain unresolved for a while longer. In their recent provincial elections, they gave a clear majority of legislative seats to the separatist Parti Quebecois, and gave a narrow plurality of the popular vote to the anti-separatist Liberal Party.

By winning a majority of seats because much of the Liberal vote was concentrated in predominantly

English-speaking districts), the party of separatist Premier Lucien Bouchard will continue to run Quebec's government. Bouchard's party provided no mandate for the separation Bouchard seeks.

If the voters sent any message, it was one of ambiguity and indecision. Exactly what Quebecers seem to feel toward their status within Canada. And Bouchard played on that ambiguity brilliantly. In his campaign he was both a disappointed and a relief. They rallied behind Jean Charest, the leader of the Quebec Liberals, because it was thought that if anyone could stem the separatist tide it was Charest.

But he was outmaneuvered by Bouchard, and he made a mistake of pledging to reduce government involvement in Quebec's economy — a bad move in this pro-govern-

ment province. Yet Charest still did far better than the polls had predicted. My forebears came to the United States from Quebec. French is my first language, and I spent some childhood summers there. So, I suspect, my attitudes on these matters are close to those of many Quebecers.

Quebec is culturally distinct from the rest of Canada and should be recognized as such. It would be a good country if it chose to become one. But it's also true that Canada is a fine and decent country, and its breakup would be a great loss.

Understand that ambiguity, and understand why Quebecers keep pushing for separation, yet keep pulling away from the final act. The rest of Canada is tired of the fight. "It's time to pull away from the obsession," wrote Catherine Ford of the *Calgary Herald*, in a column

reprinted in the *National Post*. "It's easy to focus on the 'Quebec problem' because the lines of this play are well-rehearsed."

Worse for Canada, every new discussion about granting Quebec more powers distorts the national debate. Whatever powers Quebec wants, some of the other provincial governments want too, as Ford points out on giving the provinces more power over social service programs.

Devolution in these matters is not a good idea. But if the rest of Canada is tired of the fight, it's also true that Canada is a fine and decent country, and its breakup would be a great loss.

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Hope lies in sight for ageing eyes

Sarah Bonaley

THE success of an operation to restore the sight of a newly blind man may hold out hope for thousands whose vision is failing with the onset of old age.

John Barr, a 70-year-old retired dentist, is one of the first guinea pigs for an experimental operation to counter the effects of macular degeneration — where the central part of the retina wears out. Between 500,000 and 2 million people in Britain have only peripheral vision as a result. They are unable to read, and many are registered partially blind.

Mr Barr is among the 10 per cent who have a particular form of the disease which may be operable. The treatment is still experimental, but the surgeon, David Wong of the Liverpool Royal Hospital, described it as the "single most important surgical development for many years".

Mr Wong, one of the few ophthalmic specialists in the world to have attempted the technique, said he had been "lucky" to have a patient with the eye take over the function of a damaged part. "This is the sort of thing every surgeon dreams of because it may transform the lives of so many people," he said.

Mr Barr is the seventh patient on whom Mr Wong has performed the operation. In three cases the treatment is thought to have failed, and in a further three it is too early to tell. But since undergoing surgery Mr Barr's vision has significantly



The eye has it... David Wong (left) and John Barr. PHOTO: DAVE FINNELL

improved. "To the right eye I lost most of the vision about six years ago," he said. "Then the left eye started to go the same way. The day after the operation I could see with that eye and my vision has got better and better. I can now read again, see who I'm looking at and all sorts of things."

Mr Wong operated on the left eye, detaching the retina and making a fold in it so that when it was replaced, an undamaged part of the centre of the retina, becoming the macula, which relays messages about colours and detail to the brain.

His sight is not perfect, he concedes. Things he sees with his left eye seem near, and far away with the right eye. "I have to keep closing one eye to see where things really are," said Mr Barr.

Antonia Chitty, the eye health policy officer for the Royal National Institute for the Blind, said: "This treatment is not relevant for the vast majority of people."

But others should not despair. "People with macular degeneration never lose all their sight. They can be helped to carry on living an independent life," she said.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

IS THERE any English word that rhymes with "orange"?

PERHAPS it will make you cringe. Or even cause you to binge. To find that the word rhymes. Actually rhymes with orange. Plus several more that hinge on sounds of a similar type. — *Robin Bruce, Haverhill, Leeds*

THE 1985 Penguin Rhyming Dictionary considers the final syllable only and thus claims to rhyme "orange" with the likes of "grange", "savage" and "lozenge". These, though, are weak rhymes. Walker's Rhyming Dictionary of 1963, including a separate section, which is indexed in the Oxford English Dictionary, I'd like to see it used in a casual context, though... — *Ian Shuttleworth, London*

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "over a barrel"?

"TO BE 'whipped over a barrel' is to suffer one of the many methods of punishment invented by sailors, who have few rivals in this field. A mere whipping is insufficient, but seafarers discovered that the barrel could be greatly increased by first wrapping the victim first around a large barrel, and then attaching his hands tightly to its feet. The victim, who is unable to disperse the force of a whist, but is likely to tear and gasp when it is finally broken..."

Wherever would have singing men splashed on his open wound.

and then be left on deck as a deterrent to others. — *Matthew Henry, Cape, N.Y.*

IF I WERE given a loaded gun and diplomatic immunity, would it be all right to go and shoot General Pinochet?

I WOULD suggest no, because of the direct consequences for yourself. Killing is an action that leaves a potential wound for your mind for very unpleasant, painful effects in the future. However, if it were of benefit to others to kill Pinochet it may be worth accepting these unpleasant consequences for the greater good. Those who wish for retribution can contemplate how Pinochet, in this

Any answers?

TO WHAT does the "pled" refer in the Pled Piece of Havelock? — *Roger O'Keefe, Cambridge*

WHEN was the word "quack" first used? — *Rose Gamble, Stroud, Gloucestershire*

WHEN was the first passport issued, and by whom?

Answers should be e-mailed to: notesandqueries@guardian.co.uk, boxed to 0171/444 171-242-0695, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC4M 3FD. The Notes & Queries website is at <http://nq.guardian.co.uk/>

Letter from the Dordogne Michael Mills

Marriage à la mode

HAVING recently been to England, where my companion of 22 years and I got married with our grown-up children as witnesses, it was with trepidation that we tiptoed back home to our village in the Dordogne. Would the villagers be put out that, having lived here for 16 years and in Maline being a member of the *Conseil Municipal*, the village council, we had taken French leave or *filé à l'anglaise* as French puts it, and gone abroad to do the deed?

The three-day drive back home to the Dordogne with a stop *chez* Midane's father in Paris, my new but somehow familiar father-in-law, was, I suppose, our honeymoon. Not that I'd have missed it for which the bustling bride and I had been, so to speak, getting our limbs in the tradition, in this part of the world of waking up newly-weds in the middle of the night with a bowl of *toasts*, or garlic soup.

Elsewhere they might clamour for bloodstained sheets on the balcony the next morning. Here, they bang you up in the small hours. And just in case the newweds need persuasion in addition to their own no doubt freshly discovered bodily charms, the *toasts* ought to do the trick. It is of the particularly spicy variety, designed to heat the vast lovers' blood and presumably their ardour.

We knew something was up when a couple of days after our return, our farming neighbour Michel rang to ask if we were going out that evening. No, I heard my bride say. *Parfait*, he said. And if your new husband suggests going out, say you've got a headache. *d'accord?* So we sat down to supper that evening in Guiton's *restaurant* in *jeune* *marie*, they gave us both an immediate heady whiff and a twinkle to the eye. If successful fertility rites were the name of the game, they would perhaps have let them. But they didn't, and it turned into a very jolly party.

We finally climbed happily into bed two hours later. No sooner had our curly locks touched the pillow, though, than it was nearly nine hours later and bright morning. We had slept like angels.

In they all waited, grinning hugely, three or four sitting under the weight of the stone fountain that was the village's wedding present to us. They also have a large container of thoroughly drinkable Bergerac, most of which they present in the next two hours, and the ingredients for making *tournai*. As we scuttled about fetching chairs, nut pouring wine, Michel's wife Martine dropped onions and garlic and cut bread.

The masterstroke came from Guiton, our lovely neighbour up the hill, who has watched over us with motherly care since we first came to live here with our in-laws nearly 17 years ago. (Our youngest, only four months old, spent her days in a Muses basket by Guiton's large fireplace, watched over by *grandmère* Martine, who would creak a warning about whenever the baby demanded food.)

GUITON had brought her own present, in it, if special *tournai* to be drunk by our blushing bride and her ardent groom. So while Martine dished up her *tournai* de *people* to like others, we drank our own special brew, enlivened with what our author said were *ingrédients secrets*.

As the others drank and thus fulfilled their bows for a husband's *chabot* which means joining a spoonful or two of wine into your empty bowl, swilling it about so that it warms the body and collects any lingering spunk, then picking up the bowl and gulping it all down, they of course filled mine to within a hair's breadth of the brim, and then half again. All eyes were expectantly upon us.

A Country Diary

Ray Collier

RIVER FINDHORN There is nothing in this world so interesting that something was watching me. Sometimes such feelings are pleasant, such as the time when we were out for a walk and were from dense cover but this time there was almost a sense of foreboding.

There were mountain hares in view, but they were some way off, and they sat at the entrance to their holes being conspicuous in their white winter coats. Perhaps the foreboding was from the strath, as the area I was standing in had steep sides with the river racing between, and hills brooding over the scene.

Then there was a storm and I turned to see the cause of my feelings — a large black spot was peering over a ridge at the new snow. Perhaps I had surprised him (as indeed he

certainly had me) and we stood looking at each other for a few minutes. He seemed alone, which is not unusual for he appeared odd; binoculars enabled me to count the growth rings on the huge black horns, indicating he was old or near old.

What I could see of his head, neck and shoulders, was completely black, and the horns were some of the most impressive I had seen in the strath of wild goats that haunt the banks of the River Findhorn. Then the billy was off, and for some distance I watched him, as he was administering the casual-looking walk that covers the ground so deceptively quickly. I wandered on down the strath thinking of the very apt words from Charles St John in the middle of the 19th century: "I do not know a river that more completely realises all on the idea of beauty in the Highland scenery than the Findhorn."

John St John

The words before the fall

Natasha Weller

Letters from a Lost Generation
edited by Mark Bosridge and Alan Bishop
Little, Brown £28pp £18.99

There is nothing to touch Vera Brittain's Testament of Youth as an account of the first world war from the female point of view. In that memoir Brittain gave us the tale of a cool young woman who fell into the emotional and physical fury of the war, and she took her readers with her. I opened this volume of letters with the expectation of revisiting the experience and it certainly replays some of the same themes; but it has its own, rather different strengths.

Nearly edited by Mark Bosridge and Alan Bishop, this book does confine itself to Vera's experience. It is a collection of the letters that she wrote to her brother, Edward, her beloved fiancé, Roland Leighton, her two friends, Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow, as well as the letters that they wrote to her and to one another.

Heartbreakingly, I think rightly, edited down Vera's own letters to

but the details we know so well are reduced. Instead, the light is thrown on to the men in her circle, the four beautiful and intelligent young men who left school in 1914 and were all dead by 1918.

The emotional punch can be put down to various causes. One, although it sounds callous to say it, is the perfection of the tragedy played out in it. It reads with the clean flash of fiction, this tale of an innocent young woman standing among four brave men, all of whom die by one, starting with her fiancé and ending with her brother. Blow blows after blow in this book, and the best fiction writer couldn't better the rhythms with which they fall.

There is the growing intimacy between Vera and Victor, ending with the finest letter he wrote: "Well, Vera, I may not write again, and so it is time to take a long, long adieu." He wrote that sentence two weeks before he received the head wound that later killed him. There are the excited letters and telegrams that pass between Vera and Roland as they plan their Christmas leave in 1915. Vera ends up in grand romantic style: "We have not fulfilled ourselves. Someday we

shall live our roseate poem through." One turns the page to find the description of Roland's funeral that his father sent to Vera.

This collection of letters is surprisingly complete, and its to-and-fro of correspondence spans a curious mixture of styles and emotional pitches. The best letters, in terms of their candour and expressiveness, are certainly Vera's and Roland's.

As high-minded, sheltered young people who had brought themselves up on Swinburne they shared an ear that could shade into rhetoric, but at heart was precise and charming. Watching their love grow on the page is an almost sickly moving thing.

When Roland gets back to France after his leave in which they became engaged, he writes: "All is unreal but the memory and the pain and the ineluctable longing for something which one has loved. There is sunlight on the trees in the garden and a bird is singing behind the hedge. I feel as if someone had uprooted my heart to see if it was growing." This book finds out the individuality of each of the young men through his language: the poetic grandeur of Roland, the gentler,

simpler style of Edward, the slight brusqueness of Victor, the attractive, jumpy difference of Geoffrey. Alongside the passages that move up a notch to poetry, the writers are fluent and fascinating just on the business of their lives. They reflect on war — but they also live it, telling each other about the box of toffees that kept them going, or the dead horse they fell into that nearly finished them, their naked encounter with the prime minister on their first encounter with death.

But the fierce pull that the ideal of patriotic duty had over them unites them all. The constant expression brings home to us a little more clearly quite why a generation of young men were prepared to kill and die in such gruesome ways. Right up to the end Roland insists that war brings out all that is finest in human nature, and Geoffrey is worried that he might not distinguish himself in battle. "I wish for the School's sake only that it might be otherwise," he writes pathetically.

These letters also communicate the visceral excitement of young people leaped up at all the noise and danger and ferocity of war, and who at first, naturally, thought them selves inviolable. Even in 1915 Victor could write that trench life was, simply, "very enjoyable and a

wellcome change from English life. This enjoyment of the noise and the danger was not a selfish thing, but a genuine one, with the writers' growing sense of the military ethos of the men she had loved. Vera, although she became a pacifist after the war, was not after her lover was killed, we find her writing to her brother, "I do not think I shall ever be a pacifist."

There are some things that even War, and I believe even wholesale murder to be preferable to misery and effacement. There are some things that even War, and I believe even wholesale murder to be preferable to misery and effacement. There are some things that even War, and I believe even wholesale murder to be preferable to misery and effacement.

A reader today can note the strain in the writers' thoughts, their own reliance on "glamour" and "heroism" in the face of mud and murder. But it would take an oddity not to read out loud to feel for their unknown and passionate love for one another and for the natural world, and not find tears in their eyes more than once before the final page, when the letters of condolence after Edward's death are laid out on the page. It is a beautiful, but also on the stage.

If you would like to see this book in the original, contact CultureShop.

underlying disturbing thought we are, even less well read than we thought we were when such Polish poets can command illustrious positions. And Seitz, a career diplomat rather than a literary critic, actually identifies his problem — without naming the country — as "the development of a diplomatic there is a fine line between educating your own government about another government's point of view and becoming an agent for that same point of view."

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The first nasty moment in his page 6, in a little anecdote designed

Poison pen pals

Sally Vincent

Vida's Shadow: A Friendship Across Two Continents
by V.S. Naipaul
Faber £17.99

You can see how they came to hit it off in the first place. Brave wandering souls, men of the wide world, seekers after truth, writers who took their work seriously as they took themselves, which was very seriously indeed. When V.S. Naipaul spoke of "reflex," Paul Thoreau knew he meant "reflexes," those who were not free. There was an inclusive sense to the dimension that appealed to a prospect of superior intellect. But it would take an oddity not to read out loud to feel for their unknown and passionate love for one another and for the natural world, and not find tears in their eyes more than once before the final page, when the letters of condolence after Edward's death are laid out on the page. It is a beautiful, but also on the stage.

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Scottish poet wins award with debut novel

John Gorton

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Writer's block: Thoreau publicly denounces the end of his private friendship with V.S. Naipaul

Walter there was a fax, suddenly, a scuffle, a scuffle and hostile from the lady herself. Thoreau cherishes the obvious imperceptibility and vagueness of his own life. He left me the second of Clara Batcher into madness and temporary institutionalisation in the notorious Bethlem Asylum. In many ways, this is the most impressive of the series, with its bewilderingly honest portrayal of the breakdown of a woman and an artist. Clara's story is partly drawn from White's own collapse, her relationship with Catholicism and the influence of her adored but repulsive father.

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This collection of stories of "erotic ambiguity" includes writers as diverse as Angela Carter, Ruth Rendell, P.D. James, and Joyce Carol Oates. The stories are set in the "border" of the "other," it takes in transgression, Internet lust and anonymous world girls to a variety of "erotic" and "wild." This is a collection of the unknown. A fascinating and vibrant collection of new and already published work.

Woman with Three Aeroplanes, by Lillian Fashinger (Review, £6.99)

It's a nice, your fiction cool and spare with an air of detachment, this is for you: a collection of short stories by Austrian writer Fashinger about the need to leave and the inability to do so, leaving cities, leaving people, leaving memories. There is a calmness about her stories which is occasionally punctuated by the threat of possible violence, sometimes followed through, and conveys the frustration felt by those unable to make changes in their lives.

Mary Shelley's lost child

Ian Thomson

Maurice, or The Fisher's Cot by Mary Shelley
Viking 154pp £9.99

The classics make it Mediterranean, but this could only be a drowsy churchyard in the English counties. The poet Shelley yearns to be buried in "so sweet a place". Violets still bloom in the graves there, and the dying leaves fell they were already growing over him. The Protestant cemetery in Rome is no ordinary boneyard.

In summer there's a pungent scent of dried blood from the altar nearby, and Gypsy kids squabble in the dust. Appropriately, the goddess Shelley lies buried there next to Antonio Gramsci, the atheist theorems of Italian Marxism.

Six years before his Roman burial in 1822, Shelley had settled briefly in Geneva with his wife and Lord Byron. That summer was a long, wild party. One night, a pair of glittering serpent eyes materialised in Mary's dreams and Shelley ran off shrieking towards the lake. The 24-year-old had to be sedated with opium. A thunderstorm ensued and a strange scribble of lightning announced an unexpected guest: Matthew "Monk" Lewis, the chimerical Gothic novelist, unsettled the Shelleys with tales of the slave trade and sublimation that he'd witnessed recently in the West Indies.

Mary Shelley, then only 20, conceived Frankenstein in the same Geneva villa. Her book's ghostly stone of British science fiction. In early 1997, the owners of a Tuscan villa unearthed a long-lost children's story by Mary Shelley, and would be Claire Tomalin like to have a look? It was exactly 200 years after Mary's death, and quite a scoop, Maurice, or The Fisher's Cot was written in the high tide of Romanticism, two years after the publication of Frankenstein and on the eve of Keats's death from tuberculosis. Mary, who had by now lost all three of her children, wrote it in mourning, and as a meagre consolation. Very soon her

husband would be drowned in the turquoise of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Unlike Frankenstein, however, Maurice has scant literary merit. Set on the Devon coast near Torquay, it's a thin fable about a boy's abduction from his family and his reunion 17 years later. The image of Maurice's shoes found in a field "two miles from the river" was certainly more potent in an age when child-stealing was not so commonly reported. Yet there's little excitement or tension compared with the juvenile output of Robert Louis Stevenson, or Walter De La Mare.

Fortunately Claire Tomalin's long introduction is a tremendously good read. It describes not only the documents' discovery and likely genesis, but also Mary Shelley's madcap circle. In one of the strangest mysteries of the Shelley story, a baby girl was registered in the poet's name at a Naples orphanage in early 1818; unaccountably, the infant was abandoned when the Shelleys moved up to Rome soon after.

The archives of the Santa Maria dell'Annunziata founding hospital did not reveal the girl's identity. Instead, a baptismal certificate was discovered in a church nearby. Elena Adelaide Shelley was probably the daughter of an English aristocrat who she became besotted with Shelley and, unaware of his attachment to Mary, followed him to Naples, where she left Elena to the poet's care. Two years later, Shelley found that the girl had died.

According to Tomalin, Elena Adelaide was a model for Maurice, the lost child in Mary Shelley's novel. This seems plausible. Mary wrote it for the 11-year-old daughter of her friend and fellow exile in Italy, Lady Mountbatten, herself in a broken marriage. Tomalin provides a dry account of the document's scientific authentication and her thrill at touching the parchment preserved in a broken marriage. The dog-eared pages, speckled with brown with age, show where the quill had snagged on the vellum and caused the ink to spatter: A bibliophile's delight.



Seeing the Seitz

Nicholas Lezard

Over Here by Raymond Seitz
Phoenix 372pp £7.99 pbk

There's a lot of old advertising story, in which Copyright A wins a bet with Copyright B about how he, A, could get B to read a page of do-sie-dost text. All the above is the headline. This page is all about it. And this is why I found myself reading this indifferently written, pompous and distorted book right to the bitter end. Because it's all about us, the Brits.

Well, sort of. It's a view of the country as seen from the perspective of the US Ambassador to the Court of St James's, which means that his idea of reality in contemporary Britain is not the same as ours. (You don't see much with your head up the Queen's bum.)

The first nasty moment in his page 6, in a little anecdote designed

to alert us to his wife's early good sense. A couple of times up late for dinner, saying his Major rehearsal had over-run. "Ah, Mozart," I said with a sophisticated tilt of my head. I think there are only two categories of composer: first, Mozart, and second, all the rest, at which point I heard a voice behind me say: "What about Marvin Gaye?" In other words two banal opinions of the price of one.

But there's positively quite compared with what we get a few pages later. "The American had plans to develop a naval staging post and airstrip on a spit of sand named Diego Garcia." In the 1981 Gulf War, Diego Garcia finally proved its worth. "I thought that Diego Garcia once had an indigenous population, which was booted off the island to make way for military knuckle-knocks. Does that sound nothing of this?" Still, the rest of the book is more or less straightforwardly uninteresting — apart from the

underlying disturbing thought we are, even less well read than we thought we were when such Polish poets can command illustrious positions. And Seitz, a career diplomat rather than a literary critic, actually identifies his problem — without naming the country — as "the development of a diplomatic there is a fine line between educating your own government about another government's point of view and becoming an agent for that same point of view."

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Paperback fiction

Lesley McDowell

In the City by the Sea, by Kamila Shamsie (Orion, £9.99)

The first novel by 25-year-old Shamsie, this is a colourful and detailed view of a politics in Pakistan seen through the eyes of 11-year-old Hasan. Banned from adult discussion by brutalists and halfhearted, she sits outside when everyone thinks he has gone to sleep, to discover halfhearted bits of stories. An interesting and promising novel.

First Front: An Anthology of Winter Reading, edited by Charlotte Cole (Woman's Press, £8)

SOME of these are more evocative of winter than others. From Margaret Atwood and Carol Shields, there are expertly woven little tales: nature journals; Marjorie who wants more than life has given her; and a group of friends who perform a ritual of the dead. A collection of goblin tales, Helen Humphreys of girls turned to ice. All in all, a pretty even selection, but what about just as Mary Flanagan's wonderful tale of a reluctant bride Nora White arriving at her wedding in a purple wedding dress.

Beyond the Glass, by Antonia White (Virago, £9.99)

YAR of Virago's Modern Classics in 1970. White has enjoyed an enduring popularity. Last in the First in May series, this delicate but powerful novel traces the descent of Clara Batcher into madness and temporary institutionalisation in the notorious Bethlem Asylum. In many ways, this is the most impressive of the series, with its bewilderingly honest portrayal of the breakdown of a woman and an artist. Clara's story is partly drawn from White's own collapse, her relationship with Catholicism and the influence of her adored but repulsive father.

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John Gorton

Mark Ocker
Every time a new one appears before us it's a major event akin to the appearance of some rare natural phenomenon like a comet. But the new bird series from David Attenborough and the BBC—"The Life of Birds"—has hit British screens with the force of a particularly powerful hurricane. In talking about it, the media are full of it, and the bookshops are crisscrossed full with the accompanying literature.
 Yet it was interesting to go out into the world of nature and birds in the aftermath of the series. In the company of a truly companionable on the outing is himself an occasional film-maker and ecologist with a special interest in plants and birds, I discovered that his most common quality is an Attenborough-like energy, and while I'm (unconsciously) scanning the horizon for birds, he is more likely to be looking for a new bird to come and look at their square rubber-gazed turf he's discovered. He's a deep, serious, kneeling man in the colony grass, his bidding me to examine his micro-plot. "What's going on in this little patch of grass?" he asks. "I don't know," I say. "It's

cety the same or what's going on in those woods even in a re-forest: the same complex web of competition and inter-relationships, but on a tiny scale. I call them "micro-forests."

True enough, I do find an extraordinary and intricate "world" of tiny lichens, mosses, small plants and the emerging fungi and animals, and find all growing in a patch the size of your palm. Without any friend's imagination and perception I would normally miss all this. In fact, I don't see it at all, and this world disappears completely, merging with an empty stretch of coastal Suffolk.

On David Attenborough's program, I see this encounter: the world of nature as we seldom see it ourselves. But in this instance we miss it for want of resources and opportunity. The program is too short, and only selected montages of sexy snip-plets. The birds are either copulating or killing each other or some other unfortunate victim, and the camera is too close to them that the camera appears to be attached to the creature's wing. Often we are left gasping not so much at the subject but that the camera is so close. I am reminded of Attenborough's hunt-

ing goshawks, flamed as it runs across the logged forest floor after a rat, and all shot from an impossible rear-eye view. Most people only ever see the bird from the front, and so be completely honest: I go and look for goshawks but usually don't even see one at all.

The program also detects wide-angle, low-angle, and other geographical locations. One minute seabirds are falling out the sky on Lord Howe Island, the next minute we are immersed in a dense forest of rainforest trees, and we are on the Galapagos Islands, perched near a brown pelican.

I believe Ateenborough is an outstanding film-maker and a good storyteller. I think he's got a gift. With the likes of Jacques Cousteau, Peter Scott and Roger Tory Peterson he has done more than anyone to shape the way we see the natural world. But Planet Ateenborough is not a planet we normally inhabit. It's out there in the atmosphere of fantasy and imagination. I think it might be able to be made the real world seen an anti-Clam. However, my friend's world, his 15 square kilometres of turf, is a little more real. I think it's time we all go and see what he can brew up there.

He was only a candidate member, the equivalent today of a lovely 2000 rating, in his first Soviet championship. Yet such was his crucial role in the USSR team that he was sixth in the 1938 candidates, and he stayed at that level until 1971. He won seven gold medals with the Soviet team in the Olympiads.

Geller, a brilliant analyst who saved Botvinnik from defeat by Fischer in a critical game at Varna 1962, and was coach to Spassky in 1969 to Karpov in 1978. This brilliant crucial game between Karpov and Karpov in Anisot was a quick draw in the 1976 Soviet Championship — Efim Petroshev could be a man of independent spirit.

He was a very strong player today's game, played in his first USSR championship and full of rich tactical complexities, as "close to my heart". Comments are abbreviated from The Soviet Chess Magazine, 1978, and Talmanov (Cadogan, R2199), a fine review of these great events.

Kotov v Geller, USSR Ch 1949

1 d4 Nf6 2 e4 c5 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 Bg5 Bg7 5 Qc2 0-0 6 Bg2 d6 6 N3d4 Nc5 7 0-0 e5 8 d4 exd4 9 Nxd4 Nc5 10 Nf3 Nf7 10o stalemate compared with 10 Nf3 Nf7 11 Bg3 Nf7 12 Qd2 e5 13 Rd1 Nf6 14 Ne5 "Pre-

lude to a combinatorial storm" –
 Gel. 143 b1 b2 c1 c2 d1 d2 d3
 15 //a1 xh33 b1 f6x5 b2d7 17a2
 keeps /White in the game.
 15... xh33 b1 f6x5 Nuc2
 17 Qc1 b2d2 Later analysis
 showed b2 to be stronger. 18 Na2
 Q5 19 Qx4 20 Ro2 20 Qc1 d2x3
 21 Nac3 b5 22 Bg1 b4 23 N4
 Bb3 24 d6 26? Botvinnik gave 24
 Nf2! Bxd1 15 Rd1 as a tougher
 test. But White has passed upon
 their dynamism.
 24... c4! 25 Bc6 c8! 26
 Nd5 Bxd5 27 exd5 Qd5 28 f4
 Qd4+ 29 Kh1 Ra2 30 Bf3 Rd2
 31 f5 Be5 32 Qc1 Bb3 33 Be4
 Kg2 34 f6+ 0 R4 Rg1 Qc2! Bf3
 Rd7 36 f6xg6 h6x7 and 37... f5.
 Kg8 38 Rd6 h5! A hailstorm at-
 tack of the golden soldier: after
 planning... White down on the
 king. 39 Bb5 40 Qd4+ the king
 38 Rd6 41 B7 39 Bg8! Rdh2! 38
 Kh2 2 Bxg3+ 39 Qxg3 h3x4 40
 Kh2 41 B7 41 Resigns.

No 2553

White mates in four moves against any defence (by E B Cooke, 1861). This problem is featured in the new issue of *The Problemist*, the magazine for keen solvers and composers.

No 2552: 1 Rxe4! fxe4 2 Qe6+ Kh8
Qxh6! and if gxf6 4 Nf7+ Kg8 5 Nxb6
mate. The game actually ended 3...
Nf5 4 Ng6+ Kg8 5 Rxd5! Realsms.

Dab-hanc

Michael Walker

A PULSATING 90 minutes down by the Riverside that featured four goals, countless chances and two breakers, and with local pride, prejudice and, most importantly, points shared. All that was lacking in a compelling game was Shearer apart, was a partition in a pear tree.

Astonishingly, at the final whistle some home fans booed, but the majority subdued quickly. Disappointed to have seen their side surrender a lead twice, they had accepted that this was all that a derby should be — flat and passionate.

There were also moments of genuine skill, Duncan Ferguson proving most of them in the Newcastle forward line and Paul Gascoigne

However, the major highlight for Boro for a second Sunday running was the surrender of two points in the last. On last time it had been Nicola Amelio's 90th-minute equaliser at Highbury, last Sunday it was Nicholas Dabizas's looping 83rd-minute header which saw another two points relinquished.

but they were their ninth draw in 16 Premiership games this season. And while that stability is welcome, their manager Bryan Robson was disappointed.

"They had more possession, but we created all the decent chances," he said. "In the first half I was pleased, but in the second half we were a bit flat. They were awarded two or three outstanding stops."

While it was possible to see the honesty of that perspective, it was also possible to agree with Robson's analysis. They were out of danger from free-kicks and dangerous. I thought we played well. We got a step forward, a couple of good signs, but we were not there yet," he added.

Yet Newcastle did so twice, a measure of blossoming spirit so much as Rex's tactical nous. Confident, he was, but he was not alone in the fluxion to Andy Townsend's 33-minute epiphany. Gascoigne ex-plotted shell marking at a corner and found Townsend 16 yards out. Townsend scooped a foreword volley into the top corner.

Middlesbrough, though, has momentum, and Newcastle's loss was a blow. "We were just one Newcastle chance away from being

Laurent Charvet scored. That was on the half-hour, and eight minutes later Keith Gillespie found Ferguson's goal. Dennis Gough, who was the first to get to Charvet's goal, was the only one who registered his shot off the ball, sending 20-yard volley.

The visitors might have been expected to build on that after half time, but they did not. Instead, they refused the initiative — though Gary Colquhoun set to seize one of the two buxom strikers.

And he and Hamilton kicked the ball into the goal. Colin Cooper was on the edge of the area, Cooper's shot looked as if it would be blocked by Stuart Milne.

Aaron Hughes, instead, the buxom striker, got the Irishman and won the ball.

That was especially ironic because Harper because he had made two important saves before Dabizha scored, and another in the last few seconds.

Dabizha had been on the ball long enough to touch the ball on it before he supplied a strong through ball to the Irishman, who crossed to the back.

Mark Schwarzer.

That caused a chain of events, points with Middle-through to the goal, on a day of relentless scoring.

On a day of relentless scoring, the things that did not move.

[illegible][illegible]

24	18	28
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18	26	16

Man City 1;
 2. Brentford
 3. Tottenham
 4. Liverpool
 5. Leicester
 6. Manchester City 4;
 7. Arsenal;
 8. Chelsea;
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 14. Norwich;
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 37. Lincoln;
 38. Doncaster;
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Bridge

Zia Mahmood

ACORRESPONDENT, Simon Fairbrother, has suggested the following rule for bidding judgment void, as he puts it, "proportionately rewarded." If you bid and make 2NT instead of 1NT with an overtrick, he points out, you would not get rewarded if bidding 1NT and making 3NT, you collect 500 for not having established a trick overtrick.

What if you bid 3NT and make a contract, so the bid making a play in three hearts making exactly is worth more than an overtrick?

The answer, I am afraid, is the old habits die hard. While Mr Fairbrother's suggestion is an excellent one in principle, too many bridge players would have to make serious changes in their approach to the game that this idea is unworkable in practice.

As a result, the idea of a bridge needs such innovations if it is to become sufficiently exciting to attract meaningful sponsorship.

Crickets was in danger of becoming a boring game until the late 19th century when the arrival of Kerry Packer and the development of the one-day game - I wonder if he same might not be done for bridge?

I'm sure, my readers, have this

own ideas on how to make the game more attractive, and I'd very much like to hear from you. My own opinion is that the game is often too slow to make interesting viewing—perhaps it should be slowed in the same way as chess. We have become too adrenalin hooked to be flowing at its top, and nobody ever doubts without having the contact beaten in his own hand. As for redoubles—I can't remember ever seeing one made for blood and not for rescue. The bonuses for grand slam contracts and for making reduced contracts should be increased enormously—perhaps to 100% of the value of the first doubled contract. This would encourage sharper doubling and redoubling.

The authorities have an irrational dread of the psychic bid, to the extent that everything legally possible is done to prevent such manoeuvres from disrupting the laudable order of the bidding and auction. When bridge was young, psychology was a source of amusement and amusement did much to the popularity of the game. Redoubling was a principal cause of attraction

Churchill. He was the first player to use the weak no trump in modern tournament play. This was a typical Churchill hand:

	North		
	♠ 155	East	
	♦ 972	♠ A1084	
♠ KQ3		♥ K54	
♥ A107		♦ K93,	
♦ 108732		♠ 5	
	South		
	♠ 73		
	♥ A66		
	♦ J10854		
	♠ AKG		
South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Double
2 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Double	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
5 ♠	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	Pass	6 ♠	Pass
7 ♠	Pass	7 ♠	Pass

North led a club. One dummy may not have been quite so good today's standards... but don't you think it was a lot more fun?

Qoiet, please... referee Graeme Pollock
Brian Alder talking to during
assisted manager at Manchester
as manager of Rovers

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Chelsea

CHELSEA suffered their first defeat in 19 games this season – just one match short of a clean record – and I sent them crashing out of the Worthington Cup against Wimbledon in the quarter-finals.

The Dons went ahead after 10 minutes when Robbie Earle rose above the Chelsea defence with the easiest of leaders from 20 yards. Fifteen minutes from the start they doubled the lead after Frank Lee was adjudged to have brought down Marcus Gayle in the 19 yard box, and Michael Hughes became the penalty. Stunned to silence, the holders were moved to

ham Poll gives Blackburn Rovers a
ing their club's match against Charl-
ter United for the past seven years, le-

Sweden's tennis stars defeated Italy to win the Davis Cup, Milan 4-1—the seventh time they have won the cup and the second year in succession. Jonas Björkman and Nicklas Pietrangeli beat the Italian doubles pair of Diego Nargiso and Davide Sangiulietti 7-6 (5), 6-7, 6-7, victory added to wjans in both of the opening singles matches earlier in the week when Magnus Norman defeated Argentina's Guillermo Larrazola and Magnus Gustafsson beat the Argentinean doubles pair of

[illegible]

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30	Beach	17	8	0	2
31	Stanhurst	17	9	0	0
32	Stanhurst	17	8	0	0
33	Alton	17	7	2	0
34	Alton	17	7	2	0
35	Alton	17	7	2	0
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37	Alton	17	7	2	0
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